

Supply—Secretary of State

Dr. Chaput, 42-year old chemist for the defence research board, has been in federal service for 17 years.

There were rumours that a group of Progressive Conservative M.P.'s would ask Prime Minister Diefenbaker to see that Dr. Chaput is not forced out.

Dr. Chaput Wednesday night addressed a meeting of "le réassemblément pour l'indépendance nationale". He said that Quebec will secede from confederation before 1967 if the secession movement continues to expand at the present rate.

Jean-Noel Tremblay, Progressive Conservative member for Roberval who was one of three government members attending the meeting in Hull, said he had not heard of any project to approach Mr. Diefenbaker about Dr. Chaput's job.

I rise to say a few words on the question, because I am concerned on two grounds.

Mr. Bell (Carleton): May I raise a point of order, Mr. Chairman. The hon. gentleman, I believe, is talking about an employee of the defence research board. The defence research board is in no way under the jurisdiction of the civil service commission, and the employees are not civil servants under the commission. Normally, in my submission, it would not be appropriate to discuss the matter under this item, but it would be appropriate under an item of the Department of National Defence estimates.

Mr. Herridge: I have been informed that this gentleman has been a civil servant for 17 years.

Mr. Bell (Carleton): The employees of the defence research board do not come under the civil service commission.

Mr. Herridge: Perhaps the minister could inform the committee whether he is a civil servant.

Mr. Dorion: No, he is not.

Mr. Herridge: Then it is not in order for me to discuss the matter under this item?

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Chown): If I may intercede at this point, I would say the matter does not appear to come within the administrative responsibility of the department under discussion. Inasmuch as the estimates of the Department of National Defence still have to come before the committee, I think the hon. gentleman should defer his comments until that time.

Mr. Herridge: If I have definite assurance that this gentleman is not a civil servant, I shall defer my remarks.

Mr. Dorion: That is true.

Item agreed to.

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Chown): That concludes the estimates of the Department of Secretary of State.

[Mr. Herridge.]

DEPARTMENT OF FISHERIES

131. Departmental administration, \$473,500.

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Chairman, there are several matters of a general nature about which I wish to say something on this first item of the Department of Fisheries. The most urgent is a matter which I mentioned in connection with the estimates of the Department of Trade and Commerce. I am not sure whether or not the Minister of Fisheries was in the committee at that time.

I am referring to the surplus of salt fish which is overhanging the market, and the grave uncertainties in the markets for salt fish resulting from the Cuban revolution, as well as the economic difficulties facing the government of Cuba. Notwithstanding the enthusiasm for Cuba shown by the Minister of Trade and Commerce some time ago, he seems to have repented more recently of his earlier enthusiasm. Of course recent events in another market for our salt fish give us no cause to feel confident that there will be the kind of political stability in that area which would give us an assurance of the maintenance of the market.

The plain fact is, sir, that the market for salt fish in the Caribbean is, on political grounds, not as good as it was. As the minister knows very well, the market for salt fish in Europe is not being completely satisfied because fish of the right quality is not being produced in adequate quantities. The minister knows very well that for some time I have been an exponent, and I am an unrepentant exponent, of the view that serious steps should be taken to retain that market. In order to forestall the question, "Why didn't you do it", I shall say at once that I urged his predecessor to do so, but without success. I think a mistake was made by the previous government in not taking action when we were in office. I think that mistake is being perpetuated at the present time.

I do feel that during the period while we are developing the necessary technical know-how to produce light salt fish of Italian and Spanish quality in sufficient quantities to meet the market, an incentive bonus should be paid to the fishermen in order to keep the market alive. I feel this could be done in exactly the same way that the government, before the second world war, provided a bonus for quality bacon in order to maintain and expand the British market.

I regret that no steps of that kind have been taken. I feel that such action is all the more urgent because, as the minister is well aware, there has been an increasing tendency in the last two or three years to produce more and more heavy salted fish which cannot be sold in Europe but can only be sold