

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. St. Laurent (Quebec East): As I stated to the house, Mr. Speaker, whenever there appear to be political repercussions involved in an application, it is referred to the whole council for consideration.

Mr. Drew: Does that mean that it is political considerations that guide the government in determining how the decision will be made?

Mr. St. Laurent (Quebec East): It is the international political situation.

Mr. Drew: Then could we now take it that there is a policy under which the government will not ship arms or equipment unless the cabinet has decided and there is an order in council dealing with it?

Mr. St. Laurent (Quebec East): No, Mr. Speaker, there are no orders in council dealing with it, but there is consideration given by the cabinet to all those matters, and there is a minute of a decision when it is made by the cabinet.

Mr. G. R. Pearkes (Esquimalt-Saanich): May I ask a supplementary question? Does that policy apply to arms sold by the government as well as arms sold by private manufacturing concerns?

Mr. St. Laurent (Quebec East): With respect to arms that are sold from government supplies, under the Financial Administration Act they have to be released by the treasury board and the treasury board will refer to council generally any such matter that may appear to affect the international situation.

Mr. Knowles: Can the Prime Minister state what document it is that actually authorizes shipment? Is it the minute of the cabinet or is it the signature of the Minister of Trade and Commerce?

Mr. St. Laurent (Quebec East): It is the permit that is issued after a decision has been reached.

SAINT PATRICK'S DAY

MR. MCIVOR—GREETINGS TO MR. SPEAKER
AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Daniel McIvor (Fort William): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of special privilege. We would like to extend to you greetings a day ahead of time and wish you a happy St. Patrick's day. We would also like to thank the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) for giving us a free St. Patrick's day without any parliamentary doings so we can celebrate without restriction to our hearts' content.

[Mr. Drew.]

FIRES

OTTAWA—INQUIRY AS TO INVESTIGATION AND
PREVENTIVE MEASURES

On the orders of the day:

Mr. M. J. Coldwell (Rosetown-Biggar): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Prime Minister. Will the federal government take the initiative in calling a special conference of federal, provincial and municipal representatives to consider what specific steps can be taken to reduce the shocking loss of life in this capital area, particularly of children, and to consider also what may be done in regard to the elimination of these substandard homes where so many of these fires occur?

Right Hon. L. S. St. Laurent (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, that is a matter within the jurisdiction of the provinces and their organs, the municipal corporations. We shall give, of course, and we have been giving, consideration to what the hon. gentleman rightly refers to as a shocking situation. We have all been, I think, very much disturbed by the news of these calamities which probably are a consequence of the fact that there are being installed in premises electrical equipment that overloads the capacity of the wiring, and so forth, and I think it is a matter that is deserving of serious consideration.

Mr. Coldwell: I would not have made the suggestion except for the fact that it seems to me the gravity of the situation warrants some unusual action. I know this is largely a provincial matter but, since this is the capital city and 39 lives were lost, action is required.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

GRAIN

BARLEY—INQUIRY AS TO VARIETY LICENSED
AS "PARKLAND"

On the orders of the day:

Mr. E. G. McCullough (Moose Mountain): I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Agriculture, arising out of the announcement that a new variety of barley known as "Parkland" has been licensed. Can the minister state whether any of this variety will be available for distribution this year and whether or not this variety is suitable for use in the various provinces?

Right Hon. J. G. Gardiner (Minister of Agriculture): The hon. member for Moose Mountain was kind enough to give me notice of his question. I wish to state that seed of "Parkland" barley, developed at the Brandon experimental farm, will not be available for general distribution for seeding this year. The