

St. Lawrence Waterway

ST. LAWRENCE WATERWAY

On the orders of the day:

Right Hon. R. B. BENNETT (Leader of the Opposition): Before the orders of the day are proceeded with, Mr. Speaker, I desire to direct the attention of the right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) to an address made in Detroit last evening by Senator Pittman, in which he quoted a letter addressed to him by the president of the United States with regard to the St. Lawrence waterway. I desire to know whether or not any modifications of the existing agreement signed by the United States and Canada are contemplated or have been under discussion. If it should be difficult to answer the question without reference to documents I should like the right hon. gentleman to accept this as notice of the question.

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Prime Minister): My right hon. friend spoke of a letter addressed to him; he meant a letter addressed by the president of the United States to Senator Pittman?

Mr. BENNETT: Yes.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I shall answer my right hon. friend at once. We have been advised, as was intimated in the president's letter, that the United States government are seeking a new approach to some of the problems involved in the projects for the development of the great lakes-St. Lawrence system, but thus far we have not been advised of the details with respect thereto. When they are received they will be examined.

GERMAN CONSCRIPTION

On the orders of the day:

Mr. J. S. WOODSWORTH (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I asked the government a question with reference to a statement which had been made by the German consul general. Since that time, according to the press, he has supplemented his statement by an explanation in which he says that possibly one hundred persons will be affected by the decision of the Reich to conscript all German citizens living in Canada and Newfoundland for "possible service in the German army." He gives a quotation from the regulations, as follows:

—in 1936 all male German nationals in Canada and Newfoundland—

That is, those born in the three years he referred to.

—are being called up for active military service, the class of 1916 first for the Reich labour service.

[Mr. Dunning.]

The consul's statement continues; he says the three classes mentioned—

—have to report immediately, until March 31 at the latest, to the competent German consular authorities.

Further than that, when asked whether men would be compelled to go, he said, "Well, I think they will go anyway. Yes, I guess they will be compelled to go." Further he says that failure to report is punishable. I think we might well ask how punishment is to be meted out in this country by a German consul. The statement continues:

Those desiring to volunteer for service, belonging to the classes of 1911-1915, can apply for enlistment as from October 1, 1936, and the classes of 1912-1919 as from October 1, 1937. Such volunteers may apply to the above consular authorities for further particulars.

This is a most extraordinary statement, and I think we ought to have a very full explanation from the government as to what it is proposed to do under the circumstances.

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Prime Minister): May I say to my hon. friend that after he addressed his question to the government yesterday I had word sent to the German consul general in Montreal stating that I should like to have an exact statement of what he did say. I have received from the consul general, Mr. Kempff, a telegram saying that he has sent the government the exact statement he made. That statement however had not been received up to the time I came into the house this afternoon. I shall therefore have to ask my hon. friend to let his question of yesterday, and also what he has read to-day, stand over for reply until to-morrow.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: That may be technically the correct procedure, but this statement of the consul general, following my question of yesterday, has gone throughout the length and breadth of Canada. It is published in quotations by a reputable newspaper, the Montreal Gazette, and I think we should know the action of the government on a statement such as I have read.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I hope my statement will go throughout the length and breadth of Canada as well.

CUBAN TARIFF

On the orders of the day:

Mr. J. J. KINLEY (Queens-Lunenburg): Before the orders of the day are called I desire to inquire of the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Euler) with regard to a press report appearing in both the Halifax Chronicle and the Halifax Herald of March 7