

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, March 29, 1966

The house met at 2.30 p.m.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

MOTION TO GIVE PRECEDENCE TO DEBATE ON CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

Hon. G. J. McIlraith (Minister of Public Works): I should like once again, Mr. Speaker, to ask for unanimous consent to move for an order of the house that today order No. 66, under private members' notices of motion, should take precedence over both government orders and private members' orders until seven o'clock. I request unanimous consent for that motion.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Is there unanimous consent? The Chair could not hear the hon. member for York-Humber.

Mr. Cowan: I object to unanimous consent being granted.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

INDIA—REQUEST THAT FURTHER AID BE GIVEN

On the orders of the day:

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition): I should like to direct a question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. Speaker, with regard to the announcement made over the week end by the President of the United States that further massive steps are going to be taken to provide economic aid to India because of the serious and constantly growing need of that country.

While there has been some increase in the amount of aid Canada has granted to India, has the government given consideration during the last few days to further assistance to meet a situation which, according to those who have been recently there, is serious? I discussed the matter with Mr. Stursberg, who has been in India for the last month or so, and he pointed out how serious the economic situation is, and how dangerous and potentially fearful is the situation brought about through the shortage of food.

Hon. Paul Martin (Secretary of State for External Affairs): I agree with the right hon. gentleman, Mr. Speaker, that the situation in India, in the terms that he mentioned, is critical. We announced earlier this year a program to a total of \$25 million. Last Friday or it may have been Thursday, I forget which, I announced a further assistance program to India in the amount of some \$56 million. Therefore our total food assistance program in India, involving one million tons of wheat, will amount to a contribution of some \$70 million for the current calendar year.

The High Commissioner for India told me within the last hour that this represents a very substantial form of assistance which his country gratefully acknowledges, and I think my right hon. friend will appreciate from the amounts I have mentioned that this does represent a very substantial contribution to this serious situation.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, the minister mentioned that the assistance will consist, among other things, of one million tons of wheat. Will the freight on that wheat be paid by Canada? Because if it is not, the contribution will not be very helpful to India.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Mr. Speaker, I have noted this observation, and before giving a definite commitment perhaps I might look into the matter.

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): A supplementary question. Could I ask the Secretary of State for External Affairs whether the increased assistance to India announced last week was the result of any representations made by the government of the United States during the meetings which Canadian ministers had a short time ago with members of the United States cabinet?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Mr. Speaker, Canada's decision to make a further grant by way of assistance to India was announced in this house by the Prime Minister the day before the Canada-United States meeting. I may say that both Canada and the United States have been urging other potential donor countries to recognize the serious situation in India.