

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, September 28, 1962

The house met at 2.30 p.m.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

PROCEDURE RESPECTING QUESTIONS ON ORDER PAPER

Mr. Speaker: Before calling orders of the day I think it would be helpful both to the Chair and to hon. members if I were to refer to Beuchesne and also the standing orders of the house, which I understand all hon. members have in their possession, and merely draw attention, particularly for the benefit of new members, to standing order No. 39 and to citation 171 on page 147 of Beuchesne and those citations which follow on the subsequent pages, dealing with questions. I think a careful study of the standing order and of the commentaries would help both the Chair and hon. members in the proper conduct of the business of this house.

TRADE

CUBA—RUSSIAN CARGOES CARRIED IN CANADIAN SHIPS

On the orders of the day:

Hon. L. B. Pearson (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Prime Minister whether he has any comment to make on press reports that a number of vessels owned by Canadian companies but registered in the United Kingdom have been carrying material from the Soviet union to Cuba?

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the government has investigated reports which were alluded to by the Leader of the Opposition, that eight Canadian owned ships are involved in carrying cargo between the U.S.S.R. and Cuba. I would point out that all ships referred to in the press report, although apparently Canadian owned, are under the British flag and are operated and managed by British companies. Five of the ships have always been under British registry since they were built during the war. The other three were transferred to British registry under an arrangement worked out in 1950.

As the hon. gentleman knows, under maritime law and general international practice, ships are subject to the laws of the country under whose flag they operate.

Hon. Lionel Chevrier (Laurier): May I ask a supplementary question of the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Having regard to the fact that these vessels to which the Prime Minister has referred are considered by the government as a contribution to any allied shipping arrangements in case of emergency, and notwithstanding what has just been said, does the minister feel that this kind of trade is in conformity with that policy?

Hon. Howard C. Green (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member, as a former minister of transport, should have asked a much more sensible question than that. He knows very well that the answer given by the Prime Minister was the correct one. These ships, under the law, are British ships under British registry and not under Canadian registry. They were put there while the hon. member for Laurier was minister of transport.

Mr. Chevrier: I should like to ask a supplementary question of the minister, who did not take the trouble to answer my first question.

Mr. Green: Because it was a foolish question.

Mr. Chevrier: Let me add this. Having regard to the fact that these ships, notwithstanding that they are under British registry, pay income tax to the government of Canada, does the minister consider under these circumstances that this policy is in accordance with the policy of the government?

Mr. Green: Well, I have never heard of ships paying income tax.

PUBLIC SERVICE

REQUEST FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF SALARY REVISIONS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. J. A. Byrne (Kootenay East): May I direct a question to the Prime Minister. In view of the serious unrest amongst federal civil servants, will the Prime Minister assure the house that he will give immediate consideration to a request by the civil service association for an immediate implementation of salary revisions for classes in group B of the cyclical salary review program—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I should like to draw to the attention of the hon. member, who