

ST. PIERRE AND MIQUELON

INQUIRY AS TO REPORTED ACQUISITION OF ISLANDS
BY UNITED STATES

On the orders of the day:

Mr. O. L. BOULANGER (Bellechasse): I wish to ask a question of the Prime Minister based upon press reports to the effect that the French islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon in the gulf of the St. Lawrence might be acquired by the United States. I should like to ask if this is true, and whether the government of Canada is prepared to take steps to acquire these islands for Canada if they are for sale.

Mr. POWER: In the interests of our distillers.

Right Hon. R. B. BENNETT (Prime Minister): The government of Canada has no knowledge of the matter to which the hon. gentleman has directed attention. Doubtless he is aware that under the treaty by which these islands were relinquished to France there are provisions as to the uses to which they may be put and as to the buildings which may be erected thereon. The intentions of governments cannot be disclosed in this way. I have not heard of any offers of these islands being made, and consequently there has been no consideration of any proposals to purchase them either for this country or for the interests mentioned by the hon. gentleman from Quebec South (Mr. Power).

RAILWAY COMMISSION

On the orders of the day:

Mr. OLOF HANSON (Skeena): May I ask the Minister of Railways and Canals (Mr. Manion) when the newly appointed chairman of the Board of Railway Commissioners will take over his duties?

Hon. R. J. MANION (Minister of Railways and Canals): I do not think he has been appointed yet, but as soon as he is appointed I expect he will take over his duties.

ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

Hon. HUGH GUTHRIE (Minister of Justice) moved the second reading of Bill No. 29, to amend the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Act.

Mr. LAPOINTE: Explain.

Mr. GUTHRIE: I thought I might explain it in committee. I did explain it briefly on the resolution.

Mr. LAPOINTE: Was there a resolution preceding this bill?

[Mr. Bennett.]

Mr. GUTHRIE: Yes. I can give the explanation now just as well. In the year 1928 an agreement was come to between the province of Saskatchewan and the Dominion government under the terms of which police work in the province of Saskatchewan was taken over by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and at the same time certain portions of the provincial police force were incorporated in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. When the agreement was completed and executed on the 22nd of March, 1928—I may say that the agreement appears in full in the report of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police for the year 1928—there was one clause outstanding as to which sufficient data had not then been received to make the document complete. That clause related to the pensions of those men of the provincial police force who were being absorbed by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. That clause is as follows:

15. (a) Arrangements will be worked out whereby men taken from the Saskatchewan provincial police under this arrangement and included within the Royal Canadian Mounted Police shall be entitled to the pension benefits now received by members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and such men shall be entitled to credit for all service performed prior to the first of June, 1928, in either the Royal Canadian Mounted Police or the Saskatchewan provincial police, and the government of Saskatchewan shall contribute to the Dominion government such reasonable sum as shall be necessary towards the Dominion government pension fund to enable such men to get the benefit in computing their pension for the number of years served with the Saskatchewan provincial police.

The names of those entitled to pension have now been definitely settled. They comprise four officers and fifty-five non-commissioned officers and men formerly in the provincial force and now in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police force. In respect of these men a subsequent agreement has been made and executed by the authorities of the province of Saskatchewan and by the Department of Justice to provide in accordance with the preliminary agreement for the absorption of these provincial police upon the same terms in regard to pension as is provided in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police pension scheme. The province of Saskatchewan bears its pro rata cost of the expense. This act is merely to authorize the taking over of these men for the purpose of pension.

Hon. ERNEST LAPOINTE (Quebec East): I did not rise to oppose the bill, but I might point out that my hon. friend spoke of having explained this bill when the resolution was before the house. I would remind him that the bill was not preceded by a resolution, but was read on April 17 for the first time.