

Supply—Passports

The 26th was an ideal summer day and all the fishermen but one, who had eight boats out fishing for him, got their gear ashore. On the morning of the 27th at about 11 o'clock the same fishery inspector came along and told the fishermen that they could have a ten day extension. All the fishermen at this time had their gear ashore except this one person. Now, as this is only an experiment, in view of the fact that the recommendation was made that officers of the department should visit that district and hold an inquiry as to the desirability of starting the season on the 8th of August instead of on the 16th, owing to the fall storms in October, I submit that if this change is granted—and I hope the minister will see his way clear to grant it—the information be given immediately so that the fishermen may be able to get their gear in shape to start fishing on the 8th of August as suggested by the committee.

Canadian representation in the United States, \$60,000.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Who is the incumbent of this office?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: At the present time Mr. M. M. Mahoney is representing Canada in the United States. As my right hon. friend knows, he was appointed during the time he was in office, and we have retained him.

Mr. MEIGHEN: He is not representing Canada.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: He acts as an agent for us at Washington. He keeps in touch with the departments and furnishes the government with information.

Mr. MEIGHEN: What does he receive?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Five thousand dollars a year.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Is the Canadian representative to be appointed, or what event is that waiting on?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: The government is giving very careful consideration to the selection of the right person. It is a little difficult to name just the one one wishes at the moment.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Three years is a pretty long moment. I would be really alarmed whether the government could stand the mental stain of careful consideration of that subject much longer.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: We shall be glad to be relieved of it.

Item agreed to.

Salaries and expenses, Passport Office, \$24,200.

[Mr. Doucet.]

Mr. NEILL: I wish to draw the attention of the Prime Minister, in whose department I presume this comes, to the weird, prehistoric rites a man has to go through in this country to get liberty to go to the land of his birth. I am not referring to the officials mentioned in this particular vote. They are the junior officers, and I wish to give them credit for carrying out the absurd system with such skill and devotion to the task as they can. I am referring rather to the gentleman at the head of the department, who is the Under Secretary of State for External Affairs. I suppose it would be more appropriate if I brought this matter up under the vote for his salary, and I intended to do so, and to move to reduce it. The passport system is objectionable in this country, and also I find by a quotation from a British paper, in the Old Country. It seems the British government desire to keep up the passport system because they wish to keep out aliens; they are not concerned with any other feature. Let us concede that we are not able to do away with the system in its entirety. The next thing to consider is the method by which we should conduct this passport system. One would suppose that common sense would lead us to ask that the regulations under which we would be governed would be such as would tend to a maximum of efficiency and a minimum of expense and inconvenience and trouble to the public. I think I shall be able to show that these regulations have failed in every one of those respects. There is no occasion to take a partisan view of this matter, because the leader of the opposition was the technical head of this department when he was in charge, just as the Prime Minister to-day, and if they ever had been made sensible of these absurd regulations I am sure they would have wiped them out very speedily. They appear to have been adopted at the whim of some individual utterly uninformed or utterly indifferent to the convenience of the general public. They form a very fine example of the extremes to which bureaucratic tyranny and autocratic, hidebound red taped and mossgrown officialism will go. I will read some of the regulations to show how unsupported in law or in sense they are, and how irritating and delaying and useless and unnecessary they are. I took this matter up with the department when I first came down here this session in an endeavour to get the regulations modified along the lines of common sense, and failing to get any satisfaction I addressed a request to the department, to which I received the following reply: