

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

FRIDAY, 21st August, 1896.

The SPEAKER took the Chair at Three o'clock.

PRAYERS.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE.

Mr. SPEAKER. With reference to questions to be put by members and notices of motion, it would be perhaps as well, at the beginning of the Parliament, to have a clear understanding of the rule, I think it is 25, which provides that when questions or motions are not brought forward in their order, they shall be dropped, unless, under the usage which has grown up, they are allowed to stand at the request of the Government. It is not a part of the rule, but it is a usage or understanding, which of course will be observed unless the House decides to the contrary. But I wish to indicate to the hon. members, a large number of whom are new, that when questions are called and not put, and when notices of motion are called and not moved, for any reason, they disappear from the Order paper unless they are allowed to stand at the request of the Government.

GRAIN STANDARDS FOR MANITOBA AND THE NORTH-WEST.

Mr. WOOD (Brockville) asked,

Whether it is the intention of the Government to make any changes in the rules regulating the selection of grain standards for Manitoba and the North-west during the present year?

The CONTROLLER OF INLAND REVENUE (Sir Henri Joly de Lotbinière). It is not the intention to make any changes as to the selection of grain standards, which will require any amendment to the Inspection Act. The department is considering several minor features which the Act permits to be dealt with departmentally; but I am unable at present to state positively that any changes will be made this year.

THE METRIC SYSTEM OF WEIGHTS AND MEASURES.

Mr. WOOD (Brockville) asked,

Whether it is the intention of the Government to adopt the metric system of weights and measures in lieu of the system now in force in Canada?

The CONTROLLER OF INLAND REVENUE (Sir Henri Joly de Lotbinière). It is not the intention of the Government to adopt the metric system of weights and measures. It is practically optional now under the 35th section of the 104th Chapter of the Revised Statutes.

THE RULES OF THE HOUSE.

Mr. SPEAKER. Before calling the next order, I would like to state, what will no doubt be interesting to all the members of the House, particularly the new members, that I have made inquiry as to the time when the printed rules of the House will be ready for distribution among the members, and I find that they will be ready on Monday.

ADJOURNMENT—THE CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT.

The PRIME MINISTER (Mr. Laurier). Mr. Speaker, I now move that the House do adjourn, and I beg to state to the hon. gentleman opposite, with regard to the correspondence he asked for yesterday, which took place between the late Prime Minister and His Excellency on the occasion of the resignation of the Ministry, that we have the assent of His Excellency to bring down this correspondence, and it will be laid on the Table of the House as soon as the Address is passed.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. I would like to say, Mr. Speaker, in reference to the statement which the hon. leader of the Government has just made, that I think it would be very desirable to have that correspondence, which His Excellency the Governor General has consented to being laid before the House, on the Table of the House previous to the Address being passed. There is no reason that I can possibly imagine why it should not precede the passage of the Address, and the hon. gentleman will see at once that as it may raise a grave constitutional question, it is very desirable that the House should have an opportunity of discussing that matter in connection with the Address. I think I am correct in the impression which I have at this moment that it is usual for ministerial explanations, or explanations on the part of those in the Government in regard to the formation of a new Government, or explanations of gentlemen who have held positions in an administration, to be at the very earliest possible moment submitted to Parliament. The House is entitled to know, and the country is entitled to know, at as early a moment as possible, the circumstances that have attended the resignation of one Government and the formation of another. I do hope, therefore, that the hon. gentleman will kindly reconsider that matter, and, having obtained the consent of His Excellency the Governor General to lay the correspondence upon the Table of the House, will be good enough to lay it on the Table before the consideration of the Address in answer to the Speech.

The PRIME MINISTER. I must say to the hon. gentleman that for my part I have serious doubts as to the constitutionality of