

# House of Commons Debates

## SECOND SESSION—ELEVENTH PARLIAMENT

### HOUSE OF COMMONS.

MONDAY, January 17, 1910.

The SPEAKER took the Chair at Three o'clock.

#### HALIFAX AND ESQUIMALT NAVAL YARDS.

On the orders of the day being called:

Sir FREDERICK BORDEN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to give the answer which I promised to my hon. friend the leader of the opposition (Mr. R. L. Borden) last Thursday in connection with a paragraph which he read from a statement in the London 'Times,' purporting to have been made by Sir Wm. White. The answer is as follows:

With reference to the matter of the Halifax and Esquimalt naval yards, referred to by the hon. the leader of the Opposition yesterday, and with particular reference to the observations of Sir William White, published in the London 'Times' of November 19 last, regarding the condition of these naval yards, the reply, so far as the Department of Militia and Defence is concerned, is as follows:—

Whatever action has been taken with regard to the armament and works at Esquimalt, has been taken with the full cognizance and concurrence of the Imperial War Office and in furtherance of their policy at the time the fortress was taken over.

With respect to the information which Sir William White stated that he had received that the naval base at Halifax was in a similar condition to that at Esquimalt, the only remark which can be made is that the fortress at Halifax is believed to be in at least as efficient a condition at the present moment, both as regards armament and works, as it was when taken over from the imperial authorities.

So far as the Department of Marine and Fisheries is concerned, the following information has been received from that department:—

With regard to Esquimalt, the naval yard at that station is still under the imperial authorities. The machinery is lying idle, but well looked after. The same is to be said as regards the buildings. The station has, however, been reduced to two gun vessels and one survey ship.

With regard to Halifax, the machinery in the workshops is looked after, though the parts are not assembled for working.

#### MANITOBA FISHERY COMMISSION.

Mr. CAMPBELL. I wish to ask the minister who is in charge of the Department of Marine and Fisheries, when the report of the fisheries commission that has been working in Manitoba is going to be brought down? It was promised by the Minister of Marine and Fisheries that it would be brought down just as soon as printed. It was printed, I understand, eight or ten days ago, or perhaps earlier, and under those circumstances I would expect to have it brought down. I asked the right hon. Prime Minister (Sir Wilfrid Laurier) the other day and he told me he would attend to it at the earliest possible moment. That was three or four days ago, and I would like to know if it has yet been attended to.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. The report has been prepared, and I understand has been signed by two of the commissioners. It has been sent to the third commissioner, Mr. Metcalfe, to ascertain if he concurs in it, and if so, for his signature. As soon as the department is informed whether Mr. Metcalfe has signed the report or has signified his assent, the report will be brought down and communicated to my hon. friend.

Mr. CAMPBELL. I would like to ask for further information. I am afraid the acting minister is not up to date in regard to this question. I understand the commissioners' report has been printed and has been signed by the three commissioners. Why has it not been brought down?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. No, Mr. Speaker, the acting minister is absolutely up to date, although he is something of a novice in the office. The report has been printed, and printed as if the three commissioners had signed it, but it has been ascertained that the third commissioner has not yet signed it, and it has been sent to him to ascertain whether he concurs in it in its entirety, or whether he dissents in any particular. As soon as we have this information, the report will be brought down.

Mr. CAMPBELL. May I again ask what is the harm in presenting that report as