

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, August 2, 1956

The house met at eleven o'clock.

COMMONWEALTH OF NATIONS

ANNOUNCEMENT OF ROYAL ASSENT TO LEGISLATION CREATING BRITISH CARIBBEAN FEDERATION

Right Hon. L. S. St. Laurent (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, today Her Majesty the Queen is giving royal assent to United Kingdom legislation enabling the creation of a British Caribbean federation. The federation will not legally come into being until a constitution is adopted and a governor general appointed. Nevertheless, the passage of the Caribbean federation bill is such an important milestone that in those colonies which will eventually comprise the federation, that is to say, Jamaica, Trinidad, the Leeward islands, the Windward islands and Barbados, today is being celebrated as Federation day.

I am sure all hon. members will wish to join with me in expressing, on behalf of the people of Canada, our gratification at the substantial achievement represented by the legislation which is being submitted for royal assent today, and our warmest wishes for the future of the federation.

Hon. George A. Drew (Leader of the Opposition): I know that every hon. member of this house, and I am sure every Canadian, welcomes this historic milestone. I think there is one reason why all of us must feel a sense of the historic significance of what is taking place, and that is the fact that it was from the area of the Caribbean that the first reported knowledge of the new world was brought back to Europe. Christopher Columbus discovered what became known as America first of all by a visit to the Caribbean. Therefore today we are seeing the fulfilment of a great historic event, and I know that every one of us here will wish to the new federation success, happiness, prosperity and a great future within the commonwealth of free nations which we all respect.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT

AMENDMENT EXTENDING PROVISIONS TO PERSONS ENGAGED IN FISHING

Hon. Milton F. Gregg (Minister of Labour) moved that the house go into committee at the next sitting to consider the following resolution, which has been recommended to the house by His Excellency:

That it is expedient to introduce a measure to amend the Unemployment Insurance Act to authorize the unemployment insurance commission with the approval of the governor general in council to make regulations providing for the extension of the act to persons engaged in fishing notwithstanding that they are not employees of other persons, and for including as an employer of a fisherman any person with whom the fisherman enters into contractual or other commercial relationship in respect of his occupation as a fisherman, and also to modify the provisions relating to the requalification requirements for certain subsequent benefit periods and to adjust the duration of regular and seasonal benefits accordingly.

Motion agreed to.

PUBLIC SERVICE

INQUIRY AS TO FILLING OF VACANCY ON CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

On the orders of the day:

Mrs. Ellen L. Fairclough (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I should like to address a question to the Prime Minister. In view of the report which I noticed in the press the other day to the effect that the civil service association has made representations to the Prime Minister for action in the filling of the vacancy on the civil service commission, will the Prime Minister say when he expects to make that appointment?

Right Hon. L. S. St. Laurent (Prime Minister): I hope it will be made very soon. We have had the matter under active consideration. As the hon. lady knows, there are a great many ladies who feel that they would be well qualified to occupy that position. It is a matter to which we have to give serious consideration, because it is never easy to make a proper selection as between so many qualified candidates.

Mrs. Fairclough: I am sure the Prime Minister is quite correct, but may I take it from his words that the appointment will be a woman?

Mr. St. Laurent (Quebec East): I sincerely hope so, and we have not been considering anything else.

TRADE

COTTON—STATEMENT ON UNITED STATES SUBSIDY ON EXPORTS

On the orders of the day:

Hon. J. J. McCann (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, yesterday I took notice of a question by the hon. member for