

QUESTION PASSED AS ORDER FOR RETURN.

Mr. CLARK (Red Deer):

How many houses have been commenced, and how many finished, under the legislation of a year ago?

ELECTION IN ST. JAMES, MONTREAL.

On the Orders of the Day:

Mr. PIERRE FRANCOIS CASGRAIN (Charlevoix-Montmorency): Before the Orders of the Day are called, Mr. Speaker, may I inquire of the Government if there is any truth in a statement published last night in *La Patrie*, to the effect that the election in St. James Division, Montreal, may be delayed owing to certain difficulties in getting the voters' list ready at the proper time?

Rt. Hon. C. J. DOHERTY (Minister of Justice): I saw the article in *La Patrie* to which the hon. gentleman refers, and have caused inquiry to be made as to what foundation there is in fact for the statements it contains, and that is all I can say at the present moment. I am not aware whether the statements are accurate or not, and in the absence of definite information in the matter it is impossible for me to form an opinion as to what effect might be on the election if those statements were true.

NAVAL POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT.

STATEMENT BY HON. MR. BALLANTYNE, MINISTER OF NAVAL SERVICE.

Hon. C. C. BALLANTYNE (Minister of Naval Service):* Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day are called I desire to make a statement on the Government's policy in regard to naval affairs:

The Government has had under consideration for some time the question of the naval defence of Canada and the suggestion of Admiral Viscount Jellicoe in reference thereto.

In view of Canada's heavy financial commitments and of the fact that Great Britain has not as yet decided on her permanent naval policy, and of the approaching Imperial Conference at which the question of naval defence of the Empire will come up for discussion between the Home Government and the Overseas Dominions, it has been decided to defer in the meantime action in regard to the adoption of a permanent naval policy for Canada.

The Government has decided to carry on the Canadian Naval Service along pre-war lines and has accepted the offer of Great Britain of one light cruiser and two torpedo boat destroyers to take the place of the pre-

sent obsolete and useless training ships, the *Niobe* and *Rainbow*.

The Minister of Naval Service, in order to be free to thoroughly reorganize and place the present service on an economical and efficient basis, has issued orders for the demobilization of all officers and naval ratings and for the discontinuance of civilian help at headquarters and at the Naval Dockyards in Esquimalt and Halifax. The Canadian officers who are in the Imperial fleet and who are now being paid by the Canadian Government will be recalled and placed on duty with the Canadian Naval Service. The Naval College will also be continued. After reorganization has been completed, only those officers and other ratings and civilians will be taken on who are absolutely necessary and possess the qualifications desired.

In addition to this announcement, Mr. Speaker, I beg to inform the House that the Director of Naval Service, Admiral Sir Charles Kingsmill, has retired. He has been Director of Naval Service since the inception of the Canadian Navy in 1910, and he has performed his duties in a most satisfactory manner. I therefore wish to tender him now, on the floor of this House, my thanks as Minister of Naval Service, as well as the thanks of the Canadian Government. An officer of a junior rank will shortly be appointed.

Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Leader of the Opposition): I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that all hon. gentlemen on this side of the House will join with the minister in expressing our thanks to Admiral Kingsmill for the manner in which he has discharged his duties as Director of the Canadian Naval Service. May I ask the minister whether I was right in understanding him to say at the beginning of his remarks that the Government at the present time has no naval policy? I took that interpretation from his utterance. Possibly he used the words "permanent naval policy." But does that give us to understand that the Government has no permanent naval policy?

Mr. BALLANTYNE: Mr. Speaker, I stated the position of the Government in very clear and precise terms. I shall be glad indeed to send across the floor of the House to the leader of the Opposition a typewritten copy of precisely what I did say.

Mr. E. B. DEVLIN: I should like to ask the minister whether, before a permanent naval policy is entered upon, the Government will consult the electors of Canada.