

FIFTH PAN-AMERICAN HIGHWAYS CONFERENCE—  
PERU

Mr. FRASER (Peterborough West):

1. Has Canada accepted the invitation of Peru to send representatives to the fifth Pan-American highways congress to be held July 15-25?

2. If so, who will represent Canada at this congress?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING:

1. To date no official invitation has been received.

2. Answered by No. 1.

JAPANESE NATIONALS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA—  
EMPLOYMENT IN FORESTS ON CROWN LANDS

Mr. ROSS (St. Paul's):

1. Does order in council P.C. 1422, dated 23rd day of February, 1943, override the authority of the statutes of the province of British Columbia?

2. Does the said order P.C. 1422 of 1943 authorize the employment of persons of Japanese origin in the forests on crown lands held in the right of the province of British Columbia?

3. If so, how many persons of Japanese origin have been so employed?

Mr. MARTIN:

1 and 2. Order in council P.C. 1422 provides: "From and after the date of this order and for the duration of the emergency created by the present war no statute of the province of British Columbia and no order in council made pursuant to any such statute or otherwise and no term or condition contained in any contract, lease, licence or concession or other instrument shall operate to disqualify or prohibit any person of Asiatic racial origin, wherever born, from employment in any capacity in the timber industry in the province of British Columbia and no one employing any such person in any such capacity in the timber industry in the said province shall, by reason of any provision in any such statute, order in council, contract, lease, licence, concession or other instrument, be subject to any penalty, forfeiture or other liability."

3. Approximately 1,200 persons of Japanese origin are employed in British Columbia woods operations on production of lumber, fuelwood, etc. The department has no means of knowing how many of these are working for employers carrying on operations on crown lands as distinct from privately-owned lands.

SELECTIVE SERVICE—FARM WORKERS

Mr. REID:

What steps have been taken by the Department of Labour to ensure a more effective application of the national selective service regulations designed to retain workers on the farm?

Mr. MARTIN: Changes have been made in both the civilian and mobilization regulations for making more effective the policy of

stabilizing employment in agriculture and steps have been taken to ensure improvement in the administration of this policy.

The original national selective service civilian regulations (order in council P.C. 7595, August 28, 1942), permitted men from farms to work outside of agriculture for not more than 30 consecutive days without securing a permit from an employment and selective service office. This meant that a farmer could accept non-agricultural employment for several periods during the year not exceeding thirty days each without having to obtain a permit.

An improvement in this regulation was effected in the amendment to the national selective service civilian regulations (order in council P.C. 246, January 19, 1943). This amendment dropped the 30 consecutive day provision and replaced it with a clause, stating that farm workers could not accept employment outside of agriculture without securing a permit if that employment were taken in an urban centre of over 5,000 population. They were allowed to take employment outside of agriculture for 60 days in a calendar year without obtaining a permit when such employment was not in an urban centre of over 5,000 population, but only at such periods when they could be spared from the farms.

Several circulars have gone out to employment offices emphasizing the necessity for keeping men on the farms, containing specific instructions that regulations designed to accomplish this were to be rigidly enforced.

In the spring of 1943 men with practical experience and training in agriculture were appointed as agricultural employment advisers in the different regions. One of their jobs is to keep the local employment offices constantly informed of farm labour requirements and to see that regulations governing employment in agriculture are fully understood and effectively carried out by the local offices.

When the national selective service policy was introduced in March, 1942, an important change was made in the mobilization regulations so that these regulations would conform to the general policy of retaining essential man power on farms. This change included a special provision for the postponement of military training for farm workers, as distinct from the method to be used in granting postponements for men in all other industries.

Reference has already been made in the house to the interpretative letter which was sent in February, 1943, by the director of national selective service to the chairmen of all the mobilization boards. This letter dealt exclusively with the problems of farm labour. The letter emphasized the shortage of labour