

## HOUSE OF COMMONS

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**Thursday, December 12, 1968**

The house met at 2:30 p.m.

### HOUSE OF COMMONS

#### HUMBER-ST. GEORGE'S-ST. BARBE— CERTIFICATE UNDER CONTROVERTED ELECTIONS ACT

**Mr. Speaker:** I have the honour to inform the house that I have received from the Honourable Mr. Justice H. G. Puddester and the Honourable Mr. Justice A. S. Mifflin, both of the Supreme Court of Newfoundland, the two judges appointed for the trial of a petition pursuant to the Dominion Controverted Elections Act, a certificate of judgment in the matter of an election in the electoral district of Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe.

[Translation]

#### MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

**Mr. Speaker:** I have the honour to inform the house that a message has been received from the Senate informing this house that the Senate have passed Bill No. C-131, an act to amend the Customs Tariff, as well as Bill No. S-18, an act respecting the Canadian Order of Foresters, to which the concurrence of this house is desired.

[English]

#### CANADIAN CONSTITUTION

#### INQUIRY AS TO PROPOSED NEW DATE FOR CONFERENCE

On the orders of the day:

**Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Prime Minister whether the government has been able to fix a new firm date for the federal-provincial constitutional conference which was originally scheduled for next week.

**Right Hon. P.-E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Since I answered the question yesterday I have had word from all except one of the provinces that they are accepting the idea of postponing the conference. There is fairly general agreement that the new date should be early in February. There is one province

which still does not see its way clear to having the conference then, but I hope within the next 24 hours to find some suitable arrangement.

**Mr. Stanfield:** A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. I wonder whether the Prime Minister or the Minister of Finance could indicate whether the federal-provincial meeting of finance ministers, which I think was scheduled to take place immediately following the constitutional conference, will continue as scheduled.

**Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance):** I have communicated with the various ministers of finance, and at present it appears that the conference of finance ministers will go on next week as scheduled.

**Mr. David MacDonald (Egmont):** May I ask a supplementary question. I wonder if the Prime Minister can inform the house whether the government plans to go ahead and publish the position papers that were to be produced tomorrow afternoon, in light of the importance of those documents and the chance of public discussion prior to the conference.

**Mr. Trudeau:** The suggestion has been considered, Mr. Speaker. We were asking ourselves what the best arrangement would be in view of the fact we only had a commitment from the provinces that they would have no objection to our publishing a few days before the conference. The conclusion we are forced to reach is that we will not be able to publish the position papers as planned at the end of this week; the date will have to be postponed to some other time agreeable to the parties concerned, provided the provinces themselves do not publish theirs until there is some agreement.

**Mr. MacDonald (Egmont):** A further supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. In view of the decision of the government not to publish, would it give consideration, perhaps along with the provinces, to have these documents published at least in sufficient time before the rescheduled date of the conference so there can be some useful public consideration and discussion of them?