

infection is to be arrested, and to this end the decision of the veterinary inspector must continue to be regarded as final.

MUSEUMS (WARDERS).

Mr. OLIVER asked the President of the Board of Education whether he will cause arrangements to be made so that the warders employed in the museums may be enabled to take their casual leave during the summer months of the year; and, if this is impossible with the present staff, will he arrange that extra staff shall be engaged to enable this to be done?

Lord E. PERCY: Arrangements are made to enable warders at the museums to take 12 of their 15 days' annual leave in one period outside the winter season; other leave due to them has to be taken as opportunity offers. It is a condition underlying all leave privileges in the service, that the grant of annual leave should be subject to the exigencies of the public service, and I cannot undertake to adopt the suggestion made in the second part of the question.

EDUCATION.

PROVISION OF MEALS.

Mr. BROMFIELD asked the President of the Board of Education whether he is aware that in Smallthorne, Stoke-on-Trent, where school children have been receiving one meal on five days of the week at 3d. per meal, the education committee have now decided not to provide meals for children of families where the weekly income amounts to 4s. per head; and whether, in view of the hardship

which will be inflicted if this decision is carried out, he will make inquiries into the matter?

Lord E. PERCY: I have no information as to the action stated to have been taken. The matter is one for the decision of the local authority, and I do not think that I could properly interfere with their discretion.

Mr. TINKER asked the President of the Board of Education the number of local authorities who have put into operation the feeding of necessitous school children; how many have commenced since the coal-mining dispute started; and how many children are being fed under this scheme at present?

Lord E. PERCY: During the week ended 17th July, 1926, the latest date for which complete returns are available, 157 authorities were exercising their powers to provide meals, and 258,670 children were being fed. Forty authorities have started to provide meals since the stoppage began.

LEAGUE OF NATIONS.

Mr. RENNIE SMITH asked the President of the Board of Education if he can indicate what is the advice issued by his Department from time to time to teachers in respect of instruction concerning the League of Nations?

Lord E. PERCY: I would refer the hon. Member to the reply which I gave him on 17th June last. The matter is, primarily, one for the local authorities and governing bodies of schools, but the Board propose to include a reference to it in the next revision of their "Suggestions to Teachers," now in course of preparation.

ORDERS OF THE DAY.

CONSOLIDATED FUND (APPROPRIATION) BILL.

Order for Second Reading read.

Motion made, and Question proposed. "That the Bill be now read a Second time."

DOMINION AND COLONIAL AFFAIRS.

Mr. THOMAS: Advantage is being taken of this Bill to discuss Dominion and Colonial affairs. Of all Ministers on the Treasury Bench the happiest ought to be the Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, judging by the absence of Parliamentary criticism. I do not remember whether there has been a Motion to reduce his salary, but I do not want the right hon. Gentleman to assume that we believe he is full value. Seriously, however, it would be a mistake to allow the Session to close without a discussion on the work of this important Department. Speaking not only for myself, but for the Opposition, I want to say how deeply we feel the great loss which the country and the Colonial Office have sustained in the death of Miss Bell. While I had not the privilege of knowing her personally, I had many opportunities of judging her worth in various communications to the Colonial Office, and I have no hesitation in saying that not only did she render great service to the Arab people, but that she maintained the best and highest traditions of this country, and that the country is the poorer for her death. Equally, I will

4.0 P.M. very briefly refer to the loss which the Colonial Office has sustained in the death of Lord Stevenson. I wonder whether this country really understands or can appreciate all that it owes to the immense self-sacrificing service and ability that Lord Stevenson gave to the Colonial Office. When one hears to-day criticisms of the Stevenson scheme and when one reads the outbursts in America about robbery and confiscation, I at least have no hesitation in saying that Lord Stevenson, not only rendered great service, but he saved the country millions of pounds by his service in that, and in many other capacities. I am sure that we all deplore his

untimely death, and I think it can truthfully be said that he passed away in the service of his country.

A question was asked a few days ago as to what attitude the Government took with regard to the constitutional difficulty that has arisen in Canada. We on this side of the House not only heard the answer of the Colonial Secretary with satisfaction, but we felt that he expressed what was the attitude and view of every party in the House. That cannot be too strongly emphasised, and I am availing myself of this opportunity to say so, because of the General Election pending in Canada. I think it ought to go on record and ought to be made perfectly clear, not so much for the benefit of the Canadian people themselves and our other people overseas, because I believe in the main they know the position perfectly well, but in order to let the world know what we mean by self-government. It is necessary to emphasise again that the answer given clearly and definitely places it on record that, whatever action the Government-General may have taken, whatever advice he may have given, it was done solely on his own responsibility from his knowledge on the spot and without interference of any sort or kind by Downing Street in the matter.

Having said that, I would only briefly refer to the curious mentality of some of our foreign friends with regard to the Dominion question. It is very curious how every little difference is magnified and how attempts are made to take advantage of the position. I read the other day, with more amusement than interest, that the suggestion was made that, owing to this wicked, unconstitutional action on the part of the British Government, Canada should of her own accord free herself from the tyranny of Downing Street. That comment was made in a certain section of the American Press, and they followed it up with what they called a practical suggestion, which they offered as evidence of their disinterestedness in the matter—namely, that Canada might be handed over to them on the terms of the cancelling of our debt to America. I do not pretend that that is representative of American opinion—I should be sorry to think that it was—but it only shows how mistaken some people are and how they attempt sometimes not to understand the mentality of the British

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