

Inquiries of the Ministry

that they would be keeping him on for a sufficient time to complete outstanding judgments. Will the minister look into this, because he can realize how costly it is going to be for a retrial of these cases unless agreement is arrived at between both parties.

Hon. Guy Favreau (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, I thank the right hon. gentleman for his very kind words. Since he is familiar with the interest which I have always had in the Department of Justice and the judiciary, he may be assured I will look into the question he has raised.

REQUEST FOR STATEMENT ON MAFIA
OPERATIONS IN CANADA

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Robert C. Coates (Cumberland): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Justice. Is the minister in a position to inform the house on his department's assessment of the extent of Mafia operations in Canada?

Hon. Guy Favreau (Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, I am sorry I did not hear the last part of the question because my amplifier is not functioning properly.

Mr. Coates: Is the minister in a position to report to the house on his department's assessment of the extent of Mafia operations in Canada?

Mr. Favreau: Mr. Speaker, may I take that question as notice, please?

COFFIN CASE—FEDERAL OBSERVER AT
PROVINCIAL INQUIRY

On the orders of the day:

[Translation]

Mr. L. J. Pigeon (Joliette-L'Assomption-Montcalm): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Justice.

Will the government send an observer to sit in at the meetings which will be presided over by Judge Brossard in connection with the Coffin case?

Hon. Guy Favreau (Minister of Justice): We have already sent an observer to the commission investigating the Coffin case. He is Mr. Gaspard Cote one of the legal advisers in the Department of Justice.

[Text]

COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS

INQUIRY AS TO CONFERENCE OF PRIME
MINISTERS THIS YEAR

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Prime Minister. In view of [Mr. Diefenbaker.]

press reports from Australia which suggest that a conference of commonwealth prime ministers may be held this year, can the Prime Minister say whether he has been in communication about such a conference, or has he any knowledge of it?

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): When the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom was in Ottawa he raised with me in an informal way the question of the possibility of a conference of commonwealth prime ministers during the present year, having in mind the fact it is almost two years since one was held. We discussed, in this informal way, the advantages and disadvantages of a meeting at this time or this summer under existing circumstances. Of course we did not come to any decision, because this would be a matter for consideration and decision by 17, I think, prime ministers of the commonwealth.

DOMINION-PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE

INQUIRY AS TO DATE OF RESUMPTION

On the orders of the day:

Hon. Marcel Lamer (Edmonton West): I should like to ask the Prime Minister whether he is able to confirm the date of the resumption of the federal-provincial conference that was adjourned in November and, in the light of the statement he made yesterday concerning the Canada pension plan, is it the intention to introduce that legislation before the resumption of this conference or after?

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, it is hoped that the conference will be reopened on March 31, during what I expect will be the parliamentary Easter recess here, and it is to be held in Quebec city on the invitation of the provincial government. We expect to proceed with the Canada pension plan at the earliest possible date, and I believe it will be introduced into this house before that conference is held.

Mr. Heward Grafftey (Brome-Missisquoi): As a supplementary question, would the right hon. Prime Minister inform the house whether it is the intention of the government to introduce the legislation relating to loans to students, before the resumption of the conference in question?

Mr. Pearson: Well, Mr. Speaker, that would depend on the parliamentary time table and on the consultations with the provinces to which we are already pledged.

Hon. Paul Martineau (Pontiac-Temiskamingue): As a further supplementary question, seeing that yesterday in the legislature in Quebec Mr. Lesage was asking himself if