

TRADE RELATIONS WITH NEWFOUNDLAND.

ENQUIRY.

Hon. Mr. BOULTON rose to enquire whether it is the intention of the Government to resume the commercial status with Newfoundland that existed prior to the last session of Parliament. He said: Before putting the enquiry that I placed on the paper for to-day, I should like to review the history of our negotiations with the Government of Newfoundland. I think there can be no doubt that Canadians generally must feel—

Hon. Mr. KAULBACH—I rise to a question of order. My hon. friend is evidently embarking upon a prepared speech on a very important question which involves the largest interest we have in the Maritime Provinces—that is our fisheries. The hon. gentleman has not placed himself in a position to discuss the question. There is no motion before the House, and he is not in a position to make a speech or any extended remarks. Should he do so I will claim the privilege of a reply, and it is a subject so large—there is so much involved in it—that if my hon. friend proceeds with his speech now he would not only violate the rules of the House, but he would also place myself and other hon. gentlemen coming from the Maritime Provinces, who take a deep interest in the fisheries, at a great disadvantage. I must, therefore, ask the ruling of the Chair whether my hon. friend, there being no motion before the House, can supplement his question with a speech or make any extended remarks.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—In making enquiries of this kind it has been usual to allow Senators a reasonable amount of latitude in explaining them. I do not think it should be made an occasion for a full discussion of the subject, but it has always been the practice of this House to allow an hon. gentleman, in introducing a question, to give a full exposition of the reasons why he does so, and to go more deeply into it than the bald question itself as it appears on the paper. I think it would be very unfair to restrict the hon. gentleman to merely rising and asking his question.

Hon. Mr. KAULBACH—The question is not an ambiguous one, and we ought to comply with the rule. Such a speech takes hon.

gentlemen by surprise. It places one at a great disadvantage. It is a subject which I feel I am not prepared to discuss to-day; though if my hon. friend goes into the question I claim the privilege to reply, and it will, perhaps, take some hours to discuss it.

Hon. Mr. MILLER—As I suppose it would not be objectionable to His Honour the Speaker, and to the House, that a little discussion should take place on a point of order of this character, I will venture to trespass on the patience of the House for a moment. In the British Parliament the rules for questions brought up for discussion before both Houses are essentially different. In the House of Commons no discussion is permitted by the rules upon enquiries such as that made to-day by the hon. member from Shell River, but in the House of Lords (on whose rules we have largely modelled ours, in this particular at least) it has been usual to allow a limited discussion and limited debate, and of recent years the practice has become more common. In the House of Lords speeches are permitted upon questions of this kind, although the more regular way to elicit discussion upon an enquiry is for a member to give notice that he will call attention to a question and afterwards to make an enquiry of the Government with regard to it. On these notices and enquiries long discussions have taken place in this Senate on previous occasions. In fact, discussions have arisen which have gone on from day to day, and the irregular course has been pursued of allowing such discussions when there was actually no motion before the House. I recollect, when I had the honour of occupying the Chair, I called the attention of the House to this irregular practice, and I find that my remarks are quoted by Bourinot in a note to his paragraph on this subject. While I think we have gone too far in permitting these discussions, I am afraid the practice has become too firmly established to allow us to set up a different practice at the present time to the disadvantage, perhaps, of hon. gentlemen who desire to take part in the debate on this question. I do not desire—I suppose no one desires—to do that, but under the rule of the House my hon. friend will not be debarred from making any reply he likes, and at as full length as the speech of the hon. gentleman who makes the enquiry. Perhaps the House will not find fault