

LABOUR CONDITIONS

MEASURES TO RELIEVE MAN-POWER SITUATION
ON FARMS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. J. S. ROY (Gaspe): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Labour a question on a very important and urgent matter. I have received many complaints that the sons and employees of farmers are being called up at this time right in the midst of the sowing season. Public opinion seems to be alarmed over this. I hold in my hand the *Financial Post* of May 29, which complains of this state of things and asks if postponements could not be granted to the sons and employees of farmers until the sowing season is over.

Hon. HUMPHREY MITCHELL (Minister of Labour): If my hon. friend will forward to me the complaints he has received I shall be glad to look into them. I would say that the newspaper to which he has just referred cannot, I think, be considered an authority on call-ups under the selective service programme.

PARLIAMENTARY ASSISTANTS

OPINION AS TO LEGAL STATUS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. GORDON GRAYDON (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I was rather hoping that to-day the Minister of Justice might have an answer to the question which I have propounded to him on one or two occasions as to the swearing in of the parliamentary assistants. I hope he is now in a position to enlighten the house.

Hon. L. S. ST. LAURENT (Minister of Justice): I have had this question examined by the law officers of the department and was informed by them that they found no provisions, statutory or otherwise, which require that the parliamentary assistants to the ministers take any additional oath beyond the oath of allegiance that they naturally took before they became members of the house. There is a provision in the statutes under which other persons than those named can be required by the governor-in-council to take, in addition to the oath of allegiance, an oath of secrecy, and the question whether or not that would be appropriate is still under consideration.

Mr. GRAYDON: Have the parliamentary assistants access to the secrets of cabinet council, and are cabinet secrets discussed with them? If they are, it seems to me that an oath of secrecy should be taken. If they have [Mr. Crerar.]

not that access, the position of parliamentary assistant in relation to the cabinet generally should be clarified.

Mr. St. LAURENT: I can assure the hon. member that up to the present time cabinet secrets have not been discussed with the parliamentary assistants. The question whether or not they should take the oath of secrecy so that it might be unobjectionable to discuss with them certain matters which otherwise would be kept from them is still under consideration.

Mr. MacNICOL: That is fortunate, anyway.

WAR APPROPRIATION BILL

PROVISION FOR GRANTING TO HIS MAJESTY AID FOR
NATIONAL DEFENCE AND SECURITY

The house resumed from Friday, May 28, consideration in committee of a resolution to grant to his majesty certain sums of money for the carrying out of measures consequent upon the existence of a state of war—Mr. Ilsley—Mr. Bradette in the chair.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

The CHAIRMAN: We are on item 4, dealing with the construction, purchase, repairs and operating expenses of properties.

Mr. GREEN: Mr. Chairman, this item is for \$109,401,172. That is an increase of about \$35,000,000 over the estimated expenditure for 1942-43. In the break-down that was given on March 3 of this year, which will be found at page 920 of *Hansard*, it is shown that \$62,780,482 of this amount is for capital expenditure. The balance is for repairs, operating expenses and rentals. Will the minister tell us what provision is made for checking the plans of the various new army buildings before they are built? For example, is there any authority who decides what type the construction shall be, having in mind the cost? Is there anyone who decides how large the building shall be? Just what check is there on this construction? I mention these points because to those who see these buildings going up many of them appear to be of such construction and material that they would last for fifty or a hundred years, and accordingly must cost much more than a temporary building would. Yet we all know that they will be of no use at all after the war. In many cases there has been tremendous waste. Leading men in the construction business have come to me and said, "It is all money in our pockets to put up these huge permanent or semi-permanent buildings, but it is a terrific waste of public money, and we think some care should be