

Inquiries of the Ministry

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

ARGENTINA—DETENTION OF DOUGLAS BLANCHARD

On the orders of the day:

Mr. E. D. Fulton (Kamloops): On June 21, in answer to an inquiry, the Minister of Trade and Commerce, acting for the Secretary of State for External Affairs, told us that our ambassador to the Argentine would shortly be back and would report on the question regarding the detention of Douglas Blanchard, a Canadian reporter. I wonder whether the minister has that information?

Hon. L. B. Pearson (Secretary of State for External Affairs): I have the information, but I have been saving it for the return to the house of the hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker) who asked the question.

Mr. Fulton: It happens that I asked a supplementary question with reference to that matter on the same day. I can assure the minister that on this side we all share in common our interest in these matters which is something different from what is happening in the cabinet just now.

Mr. Pearson: I would not want to appear discourteous to the hon. member who asked the question, so I have been waiting for his return.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT

DESIGNATION OF PUBLICATIONS—CONTROL OF DEPARTMENT

On the orders of the day:

Mr. W. M. Hamilton (Notre Dame de Grace): I should like to direct a question to the Acting Postmaster General. In view of the fact that some publications of the Post Office Department are now being designated "Published by authority of W. J. Turnbull, deputy postmaster general", which indicates a usurpation of normal ministerial control, would the minister inform the house when he or the Postmaster General expects to take over proper control of that department?

Hon. J. W. Pickersgill (Acting Postmaster General): I think most hon. members are well aware of the fact that whoever for the time being happens to be responsible to this house for the Post Office Department takes his responsibilities quite seriously.

BRIDGES

CHARLOTTETOWN, P.E.I.—REPORTED CLOSING OF HILLSBOROUGH BRIDGE

On the orders of the day:

Mr. J. A. MacLean (Queens): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Minister of Transport if he can confirm or deny a recent report

used on the service between Yarmouth and Bar Harbor, but that it was pointed out to him that the *William Carson* had not been built for that service, the dock facilities would not accommodate it; and its draft is too deep. There were a number of other reasons why it could not be used. These suggestions were made by people who evidently were not aware of these facts.

Mr. Drew: Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question on the same subject for the Minister of Transport. Will the minister comment, for the information of the house, on a press report in the *Montreal Gazette* of today which indicates that the information in Newfoundland is that the *William Carson*, instead of costing \$11 million, has cost closer to \$20 million?

Mr. Marler: Mr. Speaker, I read the report at an early hour today but I have not had an opportunity of investigating the truth of the facts that are reported.

Mr. Drew: Will the minister take this as notice and give the house information when he has obtained it?

Mr. Marler: Mr. Speaker, I think the whole subject can reasonably be discussed when my estimates are before the house. I fail to see any urgency in determining whether the cost was as stated by the *Gazette* or not.

Mr. Drew: Mr. Speaker, I would point out that it is of considerable advantage to the members of the house to have the facts in advance of the discussion of the estimates, particularly when a statement has been given to the house which, if this report is correct, would misinform hon. members.

POSTAL SERVICE

PROVISION OF SERVICE TO PACIFIC COAST AND ISLAND COMMUNITIES DURING STRIKE

On the orders of the day:

Mr. E. T. Applewhaite (Skeena): I should like to direct a question to the parliamentary assistant to the Postmaster General. Has the Post Office Department taken any measures to service communities on the Pacific coast and islands isolated owing to the Union Steamships strike? If so, what?

Mr. T. A. M. Kirk (Parliamentary Assistant to the Postmaster General): As soon as we learned of the strike we instructed our district office officials to make every reasonable effort to provide postal service. A few moments ago I learned that the office had received an interim report giving details, although it has not reached my desk yet. I shall be glad to give the hon. member detailed information tomorrow.