

Dominion Steel and Coal Corporation have the mill, they have no raw material to make plate. The raw material is all sold to Britain on long-term contract. Britain has been consulted by the department and has advised us that it cannot release any of that tonnage, preferring to get the ingots rather than plate, so far as that particular source of supply is concerned. The government has ample plate capacity in Canada to supply all the needs that can be foreseen at this time both for armour plate and for steel plate for ship-building and other requirements, although there is a temporary shortage of tin plate at the moment. We have decided that under the circumstances we are not warranted in financing the rehabilitation of the plate mill, but we are studying the question of installing additional primary steel capacity at Dosco—that is, more open hearth capacity—and I hope a decision on that question will be made early next week.

SOLDIER SETTLERS

STATUS OF MEN WHO ENLIST FOR ACTIVE SERVICE

On the orders of the day:

Mr. A. M. NICHOLSON (Mackenzie): I had intended putting a question to the Minister of Mines and Resources (Mr. Crerar), but owing to the urgency of the matter perhaps I may be allowed to ask it of the ministry. I have here a letter from one of my constituents who enlisted for active service on January 7 of this year. He has sent me a letter from the superintendent of the soldier settlement board in Saskatoon—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order.

Mr. NICHOLSON: This soldier has been notified that unless he makes payment, which he cannot make, he will lose possession of his land within thirty days. Can the minister give any assurance that men in this position will have protection while the war is on?

Mr. SPEAKER: Perhaps the hon. member would put his question on the order paper.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I might ask my hon. friend a question. Has he himself spoken to the minister about the matter with regard to which he wishes to have information?

Mr. NICHOLSON: I understand the minister is out of the city.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Has he spoken to the deputy minister?

Mr. NICHOLSON: No, I have not.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I would suggest, in regard to these departmental matters, that information which is desired could perhaps be expedited if such questions were brought to the attention of the minister himself or of one of the officials instead of having the time of the House of Commons taken up with such less urgent matters at this particular time. I feel it is necessary to direct attention to the fact that questions on the orders of the day should be questions arising out of some immediate necessity and should be put in the form of questions. It is very pleasant to have one's constituents know that one has received their letters and read them in the House of Commons, but that is not the purpose of questions on the orders of the day. Such questions should relate to matters that are imperative and of general interest to the house.

TRANS-CANADA AIR LINES

CONTRACT FOR CARRIAGE OF MAILS—REVISION OF PRICES

On the orders of the day:

Mr. J. H. HARRIS (Danforth): In spite of what the Prime Minister has said, may I ask a question of the Postmaster General or perhaps of the Minister of Transport. I should like to know whether a contract has been entered into between the Department of Transport, who are operating the affairs of Trans-Canada Air Lines, for the carriage of mails; if so, when does it expire, and will the minister responsible for it lay it on the table?

Hon. C. D. HOWE (for the Minister of Transport): No contract has been made for the year 1941. The act as at present drawn requires that a new contract be made each year on the basis of the performance of the old year. It has been found that in actual operation this is hardly possible, because figures for the old year are not available when the new year begins. We are asking for legislation, as my hon. friend will note from the order paper, for a revision of the act.

Mr. HARRIS (Danforth): No revision of price?

Mr. HOWE: Yes, there will be a revision of price as well. It is the intention to cut the price on the carriage of air mail from sixty cents to forty cents a mile beginning the first day of April, 1941.