

EAST INDIANS

FRANCHISE IN BRITISH COLUMBIA—EXCHANGE OF
TELEGRAMS BETWEEN OTTAWA AND
NEW DELHI

Right Hon. L. S. ST. LAURENT (Secretary of State for External Affairs): There is a statement I should like to make to the house in explanation of the fact that a release to the press was made this morning at eleven o'clock of an exchange of telegrams between Ottawa and New Delhi with respect to the amendment of the Franchise Act of British Columbia and its effect upon the franchise of East Indians. The reason the release was made this morning instead of being communicated first here in the house was that it was desired to have it released simultaneously here and in New Delhi. Because of the difference in time even eleven o'clock this morning meant something like 9.30 p.m. in New Delhi. The telegrams are as follows:

Right Hon. Louis S. St. Laurent,
Secretary of State for External Affairs,
Ottawa.

I would like to convey to Prime Minister of Canada, to Premier of British Columbia, and to yourself, my appreciation and thanks for action taken by legislative assembly of British Columbia in passing bill enfranchising Indians. I hope this is forerunner of increasingly friendly relations between Canada and India.

Jawaharlal Nehru,
Minister for External Affairs and
Commonwealth Relations, India.

To which the following reply was sent:

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru,
Minister for External Affairs
and Commonwealth Relations,
New Delhi.

Greatly appreciate your kind telegram regarding enfranchisement of Indians in British Columbia which has resulted from action by legislative assembly of that province. I join with you in hope that friendship between India and Canada will be strengthened by this action.

Louis S. St. Laurent,
Secretary of State for External Affairs.

Mr. CHURCH: I take it from the Hindu statement with respect to votes for these Hindus in British Columbia that the government is automatically recognizing the new Nehru provisional Indian government.

CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS

REPORT OF AUDITORS REFERRED TO RAILWAYS AND
SHIPPING COMMITTEE

Hon. LIONEL CHEVRIER (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, I wish to table the report of George A. Touche and Company, auditors of the Canadian National Railway

system for the year ended December 31, 1946. Copies in English are being distributed to the members this afternoon and I expect to be able to table the French edition in a day or two. By leave of the house I move:

That the report to parliament of George A. Touche and Company, auditors of the Canadian National Railway System, for the year ended December 31, 1946, tabled this day, be referred to the sessional committee on railways and shipping owned, operated and controlled by the government.

Motion agreed to.

SUPREME COURT ACT

AMENDMENT TO ABOLISH APPEALS TO PRIVY
COUNCIL

Mr. F. E. JAENICKE (Kindersley) moved for leave to introduce Bill No. 154, to amend the Supreme Court Act.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Explain.

Mr. JAENICKE: Mr. Speaker, on the 13th January, 1947, the judicial committee of the privy council decided that the dominion parliament may, in the exercise of the wide amplitude of power conferred by section 101 of the British North America Act, vest the Supreme Court of Canada with final and exclusive civil and appellate jurisdiction within and for Canada and may accordingly deny any appeal to his majesty in council either from the supreme court or from any provincial court and regardless of whether the matter in question is within the exclusive legislative authority of the dominion or of the provincial legislatures.

The purpose of the present bill is to give effect to this decision of the privy council, and also to a previous decision respecting appeals in criminal matters, namely, British Coal Corporation *v.* the King in 1935.

Section 54 of the Supreme Court Act, which it is proposed to repeal by this bill, reads as follows:

54. The judgment of the court shall, in all cases, be final and conclusive, and no appeal shall be brought from any judgment or order of the court to any court of appeal established by the parliament of Great Britain and Ireland, by which appeals or petitions to His Majesty in council may be ordered to be heard, saving any right which His Majesty may be graciously pleased to exercise by virtue of his royal prerogative.

The right of appeal to His Majesty in council has been regulated in certain statutes of the parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, of which two are important: the Judicial Committee Act,