

Canadian government, changes have recently been made in connection with the signing—

Mr. SPEAKER: I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but I must remind him that when an hon. member puts a question, he should not give information to the house, but merely state his question.

Mr. HAMEL: My question, of which I have sent a copy to the right hon. the Secretary of State for External Affairs is this: Have any changes been made in connection with the signing of our diplomatic representatives' credentials? If so, what are they?

(Text):

Right Hon. L. S. ST. LAURENT (Secretary of State for External Affairs): The hon. member refers to three articles published in the newspaper *Le Devoir* on February 7, 9 and 11 and one said to have been published in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* on February 10 with regard to the effect of the letters patent constituting the office of governor general of Canada, which became effective on October 1, 1947, and he asks for an explanation in connection with the statements contained in those articles.

I received the hon. member's notice just three or four minutes before coming into the house, and I must confess that I had not read these articles. I have now obtained the articles and will give them careful consideration, but in the meantime I think it would be of interest, in view of the fact that the question has been raised, to place on *Hansard* the explanation which was given by the Prime Minister in a press release of October 1, 1947, dealing with the subject. I will then carefully consider the articles in question and see if there is any difference between what they contain and what was contained in the official statement; and if explanations are to be given as to differences I shall be glad to give them. The press release by the Prime Minister was as follows:

The Prime Minister, Mr. Mackenzie King, announced today that new letters patent governing the office and appointment of the Governor General of Canada had been signed by His Majesty the King on September 8, 1947, and countersigned by the Prime Minister of Canada. The new letters patent (the principal document relating to the office of governor general) come into force on October 1, 1947, and will supersede on that date the existing letters patent of 1931 (as amended in 1935) and the royal instructions of 1931.

2. The royal documents relating to the office of governor general had not undergone a careful revision since 1931. The Canadian government accordingly recommended to His Majesty the issuance of new letters patent consolidating the former documents and bringing them up to date.

[Mr. Hamel.]

3. Apart from textual alterations designed to bring the new letters patent into line with constitutional developments and practices in Canada and within the commonwealth, the principal alterations may be summarized as follows:

(a) By the introductory words of clause 2 of the new letters patent, the governor general is authorized to exercise, on the advice of Canadian ministers, all of His Majesty's powers and authorities in respect of Canada. This does not limit the king's prerogatives. Nor does it necessitate any change in the present practice under which certain matters are submitted by the Canadian government to the king personally. However, when the new letters patent come into force, it will be legally possible for the governor general, on the advice of Canadian ministers, to exercise any of the powers and authorities of the crown in respect of Canada, without the necessity of a submission being made to His Majesty. (The new powers and authorities conferred by this general clause include, among others, royal full powers for the signing of treaties, ratifications of treaties, and the issuance of letters of credence for ambassadors). There will be no legal necessity to alter existing practices. However, the government of Canada will be in a position to determine, in any prerogative matter affecting Canada, whether the submission should go to His Majesty or to the governor general.

(b) The new letters patent revoke and supersede the existing letters patent and the existing royal instructions. The royal instructions have been incorporated in the new letters patent which have been issued under the great seal of Canada.

4. No new commission of appointment will be issued to Viscount Alexander, the former letters patent having been revoked "without prejudice to anything having been done lawfully thereunder." Moreover, Viscount Alexander's present commission is a continuing one expressed to be subject to the existing letters patent "or any other substituted for the same."

5. An appropriate proclamation will, as required by clause XVI of the new letters patent, be published today in the *Canada Gazette*.

6. Annexed to this statement is a copy of the new letters patent, with appendices giving the text of the documents in force prior to October 1, 1947.

That is the complete statement, and I will now table a copy of the letters patent and other documents referred to. As I said before, I will examine these articles to see whether they purport to make any statement of fact that would not be in conformity with the official press release, and give a further answer after I have made that examination.

BUTTER

DISCUSSION RESPECTING IMPORTATION FROM NEW ZEALAND OR AUSTRALIA

On the orders of the day:

Mr. R. E. DROPE (Northumberland, Ont.): I wish to direct a question to the Minister of Trade and Commerce, a copy of which I have already forwarded to him. Has the question of the importation into Canada of New Zealand or Australian butter been discussed by