

Farm and Unemployment Relief

Mr. BENNETT: That order might stand, Mr. Speaker. The Minister of Immigration (Mr. Gordon) will have some observations to make before that return can be made. Part of the information sought is of a confidential character.

Mr. SPEAKER: Motion stands.

CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION—EXAMINATION RATINGS OF CHARLES MOREAU AND OTHERS

Mr. POWER:

For a copy of all correspondence, documents, reports of examination, rating and marks obtained by each competitor, recommendations in favour of any competitor by members of parliament, or others, with respect to an examination held in Quebec during the month of April or May, 1931, and in particular the marks obtained by Charles Moreau, a disabled ex-soldier, for the position of caretaker, Department of Public Works, Quebec.

Mr. BENNETT: Mr. Speaker, the motion involves obtaining documents from the Civil Service Commission, a body which at various times has taken the view that we have no such power as is indicated by this motion. On two occasions they declined to produce documents indicating what the marks and position of individuals were in connection with examinations. Whether or not that is a sound view, it was acted upon at least on more than one occasion. My own view is that if the Civil Service Commission is a body with the authority which it is suggested under a correct reading of the statute it possesses, then it is extremely doubtful whether we have any right to ask for papers in detail as to the marks any individual may have received at an examination. I think if the matter does not commend itself in that way to the hon. gentleman who made the motion (Mr. Power), it might stand in order that further inquiries might be made of the Civil Service Commission to ascertain what views they entertain in connection with the matter.

Mr. POWER: I may say, Mr. Speaker, that in past sessions and particularly this session I have obtained from the Civil Service Commission returns which were couched in language almost identical with that in which this motion is couched, although I must apologize for its being somewhat involved in its form. But I have obtained returns showing marks and ratings, even confidential ratings, given by officers of the commission. That has been customary for at least two years.

[Mr. Brown.]

Mr. BENNETT: They have refused to do so on numerous occasions.

Mr. SPEAKER: The motion stands at the request of the Prime Minister to make further investigations.

FARM AND UNEMPLOYMENT RELIEF

ANNOUNCEMENT OF MEASURES TO DEAL WITH AGRICULTURAL DISTRESS—UNEMPLOYMENT SITUATION

On the orders of the day:

Right Hon. R. B. BENNETT (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, before the orders of the day are proceeded with I desire to mention a matter that was brought to the attention of the house yesterday by the hon. member for Willow Bunch (Mr. Donnelly).

To-day is the sixty-fourth anniversary of confederation, and it is not unusual on a day such as this that we pause and look back upon our past, take stock of the present, and look forward to the future. So far as the past is concerned I think we can contemplate it with some degree of satisfaction and pride. The achievements of the Canadian people have, I think, been unrivalled in the history of the world by any people so few in number and inhabiting so vast an area. So far as the future is concerned we contemplate it with great courage and hope and confident faith.

But with respect to the present it is undoubted that practically a national calamity has overtaken a portion of our country. In days gone by this parliament has voted very considerable sums of money to assist others who have been deprived of their homes or who have suffered from great calamities when they were not citizens of our own Dominion or of our own empire. At the moment it is clear from the information the government has received, and is receiving, that in consequence of lack of moisture and of great heat a very considerable portion of the province of Saskatchewan and smaller portions of the provinces of Alberta and Manitoba will not this year produce a crop. In some areas this is the third successive year in which no crop has been produced, in others it is the second, while in the smaller areas it is the first year that such a calamity has overtaken them. The estimates vary as to the area affected. The commercial and agricultural editor of the Manitoba Free Press, Miss Cora Hinds, has completed a survey of the province of Saskatchewan, and by questionnaire, of the other provinces with respect to the grain crop, and it is now quite clear that