

*Inquiries of the Ministry***IMMIGRATION ACT****AMENDMENT TO PROVIDE RIGHT OF ASYLUM FOR
POLITICAL REFUGEES**

Mr. Bona Arsenault (Bonaventure) moved for leave to introduce Bill No. 23, to amend the Immigration Act.

Some hon. Members: Explain.

Mr. Arsenault: The purpose of this bill is to provide for the right of asylum recognized in international law for political refugees, who may apply to a judge of a superior court to have this right recognized and declared. According to the provisions of this bill, judges of superior courts may decide whether or not this right should be granted in particular cases.

Motion agreed to and bill read the first time.

NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY**CANADA'S CONTRIBUTION TO WESTERN
EUROPEAN FORCE**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. G. R. Pearkes (Nanaimo): May I ask the Minister of National Defence a question, arising out of the broadcast he made last evening on the program "Press Conference"? Did NATO decide upon or announce the strength of Canada's contribution to the western European force without first obtaining the consent of the government of Canada and a statement that Canada was willing and able to supply the force mentioned?

Hon. Brooke Claxton (Minister of National Defence): No, sir.

Mr. Pearkes: Then would the minister mind saying what was the mistake to which he referred in his broadcast last evening?

Mr. Claxton: I said that the agency of NATO, namely, the standing group, had independently arrived at the figure subsequently suggested to us.

Mr. Pearkes: But they did not announce it?

Mr. Claxton: No.

Mr. Harkness: If I may ask a supplementary question, would the minister mind telling the house what the figure was for which NATO asked?

Mr. Claxton: No, sir, I cannot.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**QUESTION AS TO EXPENDITURES UNDER
COLOMBO PLAN**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. G. F. Higgins (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Secretary of State for External Affairs a question, of

We shall co-operate fully with the committee just set up to study and make recommendations for the future development of Newfoundland's fisheries, and our biologists, technicians and economists will be available as working parties. I mention all of these things to indicate the high priority we are ready to give to the people of Newfoundland. Of course there are other provinces also requiring attention, none of which can be neglected. Our resources are not unlimited, but we are ready to co-operate to the fullest to help Newfoundland maximize the great advantages it has in fisheries production.

Mr. Higgins: I was not quite clear whether the minister said that arrangements had been made for convertibility of sterling so far as salt fish is concerned. I should also like to ask him whether he was consulted by the premier of Newfoundland about the matter of the appointment of the royal commission.

Mr. Mayhew: The answer to the second question is no. As I intimated in my statement, we knew nothing about the appointment of this royal commission until we today received a wire from Premier Smallwood and saw also a clipping from a Newfoundland paper. If Mr. Smallwood goes ahead with his plan as suggested, it may do no more than delay our start. We cannot interfere with his plans; we will go ahead and make our survey just the same.

As to convertibility, that was arranged for the current sales.

Mr. Higgins: That is arranged now?

Mr. Mayhew: Yes.

Mr. Browne (St. John's West): I want to thank the minister for his most interesting statement, which contains a great deal of material our people will be glad to get. Did he say who was to be in charge of the investigation into the prices paid the fishermen, and did he say when that investigation will begin?

Mr. Mayhew: Our own fisheries prices support board will be in charge of the investigation.

Mr. Browne (St. John's West): And when will the investigation begin?

Mr. Mayhew: I said we were ready to start as soon as the returns were pretty well in, so far as fish are concerned. Some of the fish is still in the hands of fishermen, and almost two thirds is still in the hands of merchants. As soon as we can get a reasonably clear picture of the situation, we will start.