

Mr. R. W. MAYHEW (Victoria, B.C.): I think I can give the hon. member some information in connection with the flour. Two fairly large ships arrived in Canada about a week ago to load flour, but it was necessary that they undergo extensive repairs which it would take a couple of weeks to complete. During that period the railway companies could not unload their cars because the ships were not ready to receive them. They had much other work for the cars to do, and they used their cars for that purpose. In addition, the flour could be kept in better shape in the warehouse than in cars alongside the track. I am glad to be able to report that the repairs to these ships are about completed, and the movement of flour will again start from the mills.

Mr. SMITH (Calgary West): I am sure we are all glad to have the information, but it does not answer the question I asked.

Right Hon. L. S. ST. LAURENT (Acting Prime Minister): May I direct the attention of the hon. member to the answer given by the Minister of Trade and Commerce to be found at page 4376 of *Hansard*.

Mr. SMITH (Calgary West): Thank you; I was not here.

FOREIGN EXCHANGE CONTROL

STATUTORY AUTHORITY FOR ORDERS IN COUNCIL PASSED UNDER WAR MEASURES ACT

Mr. R. W. MAYHEW (Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Finance) moved the third reading of bill No. 195, respecting the control of the acquisition and disposition of foreign currency and the control of transactions involving foreign currency of non-residents.

Motion agreed to, bill read the third time and passed.

FEDERAL DISTRICT COMMISSION

PROVISION FOR ADDITIONAL COMMISSIONERS, TRANSFER OF CERTAIN JURISDICTION, AND GRANTING OF MONEY

The house resumed from Friday, August 9, consideration in committee of bill No. 357, to amend the Federal District Commission Act—Mr. St. Laurent—Mr. Golding in the chair.

On section 1—National capital district.

Right Hon. L. S. ST. LAURENT (Minister of Justice): Mr. Chairman, it is not my intention at this time, or perhaps at any time, to make any lengthy plea in favour of the

provisions for the improvement of the federal area. This bill is nothing new; it is simply a continuation of provisions that have been made for almost the last fifty years in that regard. The fact that the matter had been in progress for fifty years should not surprise anyone. I should be very much surprised, and my descendants would be very much disappointed, I am sure, if it did not go on for more than fifty years in the future. I think it is the fairly general view that the development of the national capital will keep pace with the development of the country as a nation, and I hope that will go on for a very long time.

The leader of the opposition asked me at the resolution stage if I would make a brief statement on the historical background of this movement, which is not the policy of any one party but is something to which all those who have had responsibility for government in Canada over the last half century have been giving careful, sympathetic and effective consideration and cooperation.

The historical background of the commission is given on pages 60 and 61 in No. 3 of the proceedings of the joint committee of the senate and the House of Commons, reporting its sittings of Wednesday, June 28, 1944. I mention this because it is given in greater detail than I propose to give it in summarizing it this morning. But perhaps for the immediate information of hon. members who may not have this report at hand just at the moment, I may say that the federal district commission had its inception as the Ottawa improvement commission in 1899. It was established for the purpose of beautifying and improving the city of Ottawa as the capital of Canada by the construction of parks, drive-ways, public squares, boulevards and so forth.

Four commissioners comprised its membership, three being appointed by the governor in council and the fourth by the city of Ottawa. The chairman was named by the governor in council. All were to serve without remuneration. An annual grant of \$60,000 was provided for a period of ten years from July 1, 1899. By an amending act assented to on August 13, 1903 the period during which the annual grant of \$60,000 was to be paid was extended to twenty years, from the first of July, 1899 and the commission was given power to borrow up to \$250,000 by the sale of debentures.

By an amending act assented to on May 4, 1910 the annual grant was increased to \$100,000 for a ten-year period commencing July 1, 1909. An act to consolidate and amend the acts respecting the Ottawa improvement commission was then assented to on July 17,