

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, March 24, 1959

The house met at 2.30 p.m.

COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS

ANNOUNCEMENT OF CONFERENCE RESPECTING SCHOLARSHIPS AND FELLOWSHIPS

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the house will recall that at the commonwealth trade and economic conference in Montreal a decision was taken in principle to establish a new scheme of commonwealth scholarships and fellowships. The conference agreed that the exact scope and detailed arrangements for this scheme should be worked out at a further conference of the commonwealth countries to be held in the United Kingdom in 1959. It was also agreed that the mandate of this conference would include a review of existing arrangements for co-operation among commonwealth countries in the field of education to determine the need for any improvement or expansion of these arrangements.

All commonwealth governments including Canada have now accepted an invitation from the United Kingdom government to attend a conference on the lines agreed upon at Montreal, this conference to be held at Oxford, England, from July 15 to July 29. Lord Halifax, the chancellor of the university, has agreed to serve as president of the conference and Sir Philip Morris, the vice chancellor of Bristol University will serve as chairman. The composition of the Canadian delegation to the conference will be decided at a later date.

Meanwhile, the house will wish to know that a meeting is to be held in Ottawa shortly between government officials and representatives of Canadian universities to discuss the arrangements for Canadian participation in this commonwealth scholarship scheme.

Hon. L. B. Pearson (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the official opposition I wish to state that we welcome the initiation of this scheme for commonwealth scholarships, and we are glad to note that the meeting for this purpose will be held this summer in a highly appropriate place, Oxford University.

Mr. D. M. Fisher (Port Arthur): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the C.C.F. group may I

state that our sentiments are exactly the same as those expressed by the Leader of the Opposition.

LABOUR CONDITIONS

REPORT ON MUNICIPAL INCENTIVE PROGRAM—EXTENSION TO MAY 31

Hon. Michael Starr (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, with your permission and that of the house I should like to report briefly on the present status of the municipal incentive program, and to make an announcement. As the house knows, this program was designed to assist in combating seasonal unemployment. As at March 20 I am pleased to report that the number of jobs provided under this program had reached a total of 32,000. That is a total of 32,000 jobs which would not otherwise have been provided.

Those who consulted the dominion bureau of statistics report yesterday will know from that report that this program has played a positive part in the present encouraging increase in employment and the reduction in unemployment which is now taking place. The house may be interested at this time in knowing that since this program was first announced we have received and processed 1,909 applications from municipalities across Canada. Of this number we have approved 1,838 applications or 96 per cent of the total, and a number are still pending. The aim has been, of course, to grant the maximum number of approvals in line with the objective of this program in order to put the maximum number of men to work. The estimated total cost of projects approved to date is \$81,375,000.

The federal contribution necessary to launch projects of such magnitude has been slightly more than \$9 million; to be exact, \$9,279,000. This is the estimated federal share of payroll costs for the period in question from December 1, 1958 to April 30, 1959. The total payroll costs are estimated at \$27,358,000. The cost of works to be completed during the period indicated is \$52,739,000. Total payroll cost during the period is estimated at \$18,706,000. Of this the federal share, as I have pointed out, is a little over \$9 million. Thus the federal government's share of direct payroll costs for the period in question represented 17.6 per cent of the total cost of the works for that period.