

Proposed Vancouver-Sea Island Tunnel

(Text):

Mr. Chevrier: Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Minister of Labour a question arising out of those which have just been asked. Can the minister tell us whether the strike that is now going on between the pilots and the shipping federation of Canada is a legal strike?

Hon. Michael Starr (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, before I answer that question I shall have to look closely at the three questions that were asked previously.

NATIONAL DEFENCE

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES OF MEMBERS OF MILITIA

On the orders of the day:

Mr. H. W. Herridge (Kootenay West): Mr. Speaker I wish to direct a question to the Minister of National Defence. I do so as a member of this house and as honorary president of the Kootenay Battalion association, a battalion in which many trade unionists and some socialists served Canada in world war I. I can hardly contain my indignation.

Have instructions been sent by the minister or army headquarters to militia units ordering that militiamen, temporarily called out with special militia training units, must resign from membership in the New Democratic party, and provide proof in writing to the officer commanding of their resignations, and abstain from all political activity on behalf of that party during their off duty hours?

Hon. D. S. Harkness (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I have not sent any instructions to militia units, or to any other destination, concerning membership in the New Democratic party or on any other subject pertaining to that group; nor has army headquarters sent any such instructions. I do not know the source of the information on which the hon. member bases his question, but it would seem to have some destructive intent as far as the armed services are concerned.

Mr. Winch: We have proof of it.

Mr. Harkness: The situation with regard to the armed services is quite well known. Members of the regular forces are forbidden by Queen's regulations to take part in political activity. That is definite and well understood. No such prohibition exists with respect to militiamen. However, neither officers nor men of the militia or regular forces are permitted to carry on political activities in government armouries or in other military enclaves.

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Mr. Herridge: A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. May I say before I proceed that I resent the implication in the minister's answer.

Mr. Harkness: I resent the question.

Mr. Herridge: Does the minister know that the C.O., Lieutenant Colonel Reynolds, and Major Lee, officer commanding the 17th field squadron of the 8th field regiment R.C.E. (militia), demanded that a captain and two N.C.O.'s resign their membership in the New Democratic party and submit proof of their resignations to him in writing? Does the minister know that the captain in question, while proud to serve with this unit, severed an enjoyable association in protest against this infringement of his civil rights and a Canadian citizen?

Mr. Harkness: Mr. Speaker, I know absolutely nothing about anything along that line.

Mr. Peters: You know nothing, period; just leave it there.

Mr. Harkness: I can only say that if such a request was made I should think it would have been made because political activity was being carried on in the armouries or in the unit contrary to regulations.

Mr. Herridge: A supplementary question. Does the minister know—

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Speaker: Order. It being five o'clock the house will now proceed to the consideration of private members' business.

TRANSPORT

VANCOUVER-SEA ISLAND—SUGGESTED CONSTRUCTION OF BRIDGE OR TUNNEL

Mr. John Drysdale (Burnaby-Richmond) moved:

That, in the opinion of this house, the federal government should give consideration to the advisability of constructing a bridge or tunnel across the north arm of the Fraser river between the city of Vancouver and Sea Island in the municipality of Richmond.

Mr. Pickersgill: Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether the house will give unanimous consent to allow the hon. member to move down where we can hear him.

Mr. Speaker: I hear no objection. I take it that the hon. member, if he wishes to take a more central seat, is at liberty to do so for this time only.

Mr. Drysdale: Mr. Speaker, again I should like to thank the house for its courtesy on this occasion in allowing me to move to the central part of the chamber in order to bring