

Inquiries of the Ministry

question to his parliamentary secretary. According to the latest d.b.s. figures there are 456,000 Canadians unemployed. Could the parliamentary secretary tell us how many Canadians are taking advantage of the unemployment insurance fund at present?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Surely this is a question requiring detailed information which the parliamentary secretary may or may not have at the moment. I suggest that it be placed on the order paper.

CANADIAN CONFEDERATION

SUGGESTED REARRANGEMENT INTO FIVE PROVINCES INSTEAD OF TEN

On the orders of the day:

Hon. Leon Balcer (Three Rivers): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question of the Prime Minister. Could he tell the house whether his government is going to support the suggestion of the premier of British Columbia that a new territorial definition of the provinces should be made in Canada, so that instead of ten provinces we would only have five?

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, this is a very important suggestion into which I would not care to go at the moment.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

RIGHT OF MEMBER TO CRITICIZE PUBLIC SERVANT

On the orders of the day:

Mr. H. W. Herridge (Kootenay West): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Solicitor General, who is the acting house leader. Does the hon. gentleman consider it unconstitutional for a member of parliament to criticize a public servant in the House of Commons?

Hon. J. Watson MacNaught (Solicitor General): Mr. Speaker, neither the Minister of Justice nor myself, under the constitution, can give an opinion of that nature.

COMPLETION OF TRANSLATION OF BEAUCHESNE

On the orders of the day:

[*Translation*]

Hon. Maurice Lamontagne (Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, I would like to answer a question asked by the hon. member for Lapointe (Mr. Gregoire) about the translation of Beauchesne's. I am pleased to tell him that the work has been completed and the text sent to the publishers. It is expected that the proofs can be corrected within the next few weeks and that the work will be published in June or early July.

[*Mr. Ricard.*]

[*Text*]

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

SHIPPING

APPRAISAL BY INTERNATIONAL JOINT COMMISSION ON GREAT LAKES WATER LEVELS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. P. V. Noble (Grey North): Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Will the minister table the appraisal made by the international joint commission on the situation as to water levels in the great lakes, recently forwarded to the government by the commission?

Hon. Paul Martin (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I would be very glad to take that into consideration.

AGRICULTURE

STEPS TO IMPROVE POSITION OF EASTERN FARMERS

On the orders of the day:

[*Translation*]

Mr. Raymond Langlois (Megantic): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Agriculture. Can he tell the house what steps he intends to take, in conjunction with the provincial government, to solve the problems of eastern farmers who are now in a deplorable economic stagnation?

[*Text*]

Mr. Speaker: Order. I think this is a wide, broad, general question to which perhaps the minister may have the answer, but I very much doubt if he could give a detailed answer at this time on such a wide question.

Hon. Harry W. Hays (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say we are working on it.

[*Later:*]

Mr. Langlois: Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Agriculture once again. My last question was pretty wide in scope, but the malaise existing in the eastern provinces is also pretty wide in scope. Has the government any announcement to make to the house with regard to what it intends to do to raise the low incomes of all eastern farmers?

Mr. Hays: Mr. Speaker, we are working on this matter on behalf of all the farmers in Canada.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pigeon: Mr. Speaker, may I ask a supplementary question?