

War Refugees

the province of Alberta. I should like to know if there is any truth in that report, what is the basis of it, and what is the justification for it. It was represented to me that this was discrimination against the producers in western Canada.

Hon. J. E. MICHAUD (Acting Minister of Munitions and Supply): Mr. Speaker, as this is something new I shall take the question as a notice and will try to bring down the information as soon as possible.

WAR REFUGEES

REPORT AS TO UNITED STATES PROPOSAL FOR
PRELIMINARY DISCUSSIONS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. H. R. JACKMAN (Rosedale): I should like to direct a question to the Prime Minister. A Canadian Press dispatch dated at London, March 7, reads as follows:

The Press Association said yesterday it learned that the British government has accepted the United States government's proposal for a preliminary two-power discussion on the refugee problem.

The United States suggested the meeting be held at Ottawa, but the meeting place is still under discussion along with the composition of the British delegation.

I wish the Prime Minister to amplify, if he will, the reply which he gave on March 4 to a similar question. Perhaps he will also be good enough to reply to the following: Has the Canadian government issued an invitation for the conference to be held in Canada? Secondly, will the dominion seek representation independently, or as a component part of the British empire, or not at all?

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Prime Minister): There are a good many "or's" in my hon. friend's question, but I shall try to remember them.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): They are better than "but's".

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Yes. First of all may I say that I have not received any information additional to that which I imparted to the house on the day I replied to the question to which my hon. friend has just referred. The communications were communications between the United States government and the British government, referring to a conference between the United States government and the British government. They were in the nature of what might be called exploratory communications. There was nothing final about them. As I stated at the time, the Canadian government had had some communication with the British government on the question of refugees. But the particular

[Mr. J. H. Harris.]

correspondence referred to by my hon. friend originated with the United States government, and we had not had any communication at all from the United States government. I am unable to say whether the two governments have agreed on having a conference. It was suggested tentatively that Canada might be a convenient place to have the conference, but this suggestion was without any prior reference to Canada in the matter, undoubtedly because, as I have said, the communications were tentative and the United States was endeavouring to find out from the British government whether or where the British government would agree to have a conference.

If we are invited to attend the conference I have not the least doubt that our government would be prepared to accept. But I do not think it would be either right or proper for Canada to extend an invitation to the United States and Britain to meet in Canada in regard to a matter about which they themselves are conferring at this time.

Mr. JACKMAN: Would the Prime Minister seek representation notwithstanding the remarks he has made?—because he himself on March 4 said:

The Canadian government . . . will . . . be glad to examine any suggestions which the United States government may wish to put forward as a contribution to the alleviation of a grave and distressing problem.

Surely we in this country are as much interested in the refugee problem as they are in the United States.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: If we receive communications on this matter, and the nature of the communications permits, I shall be pleased to inform my hon. friend as to the reply.

RATIONING

ADDITIONAL CHARGE BY PUBLIC CATERERS FOR TEA,
COFFEE OR MILK

On the orders of the day:

Mr. ROBERT FAIR (Battle River): In view of the recent increase allowed by the wartime prices and trade board in the price of tea, coffee and milk used as a beverage or as a luncheon, which will increase the cost of living by approximately fifty-five dollars a year to all who are compelled to eat in restaurants, and for which increase in prices there would not seem to be any justification, will the government consider having this order of the wartime prices and trade board cancelled?

Hon. J. L. ILSLEY (Minister of Finance): I should like to be a little surer of some of the facts which the hon. gentleman incorporated into his question before I make an answer.