

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

EASTER ADJOURNMENT

On the orders of the day:

Hon. R. B. HANSON (Leader of the Opposition): May I ask, without anticipating an immediate answer, a question of the Prime Minister which he and the government might be turning over in their minds. It has been represented to me by some hon. members that they would like to know what are the plans of the government with respect to the Easter recess. Especially interested are those members who live a long distance away and who do not get home very frequently; they would like to lay their plans for a return to their constituencies during the Easter vacation. Will the Prime Minister indicate at an appropriate time upon what date it is anticipated this house will adjourn for Easter, and how long the Easter recess will be?

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Prime Minister): I shall be pleased to give my hon. friend an answer within a day or two. I might say at once that the government has had in mind an adjournment of at least a fortnight at Easter. It will not be a brief adjournment, but one sufficiently long to enable hon. members who are some distance from Ottawa to return to their homes. In that connection we have been considering what, in connection with the taking of the plebiscite, might also be of advantage. Some little time ago I had a hope that the taking of the plebiscite would come about the time of the Easter recess and that the recess might be made sufficiently long to enable hon. members to speak on the plebiscite, not only in their own constituencies but elsewhere if they felt so inclined. It looks now, I am afraid, as though it would not be possible to have the Easter adjournment sufficiently long to cover the period which will intervene between Easter and the taking of the plebiscite. At any rate I hope that the Easter recess may serve as an opportunity to hon. members to have their constituents informed of their point of view in relation to the plebiscite. I speak of that as being among the reasons why the government has had in mind a somewhat prolonged adjournment at Easter.

MILITARY TRAINING

POSITION OF PERSONS ENGAGED IN MAPLE SUGAR AND VEGETABLE PRODUCTION

On the orders of the day:

Mr. LIGUORI LACOMBE (Laval-Two Mountains): I want to direct a question to the Minister of National War Services. At this time, when the production of maple

sugar is about to begin and the production of vegetables is under way in hothouses, will the minister continue to call farmers and farmers' sons for military training?

Hon. J. T. THORSON (Minister of National War Services): I am afraid it will not be possible to meet the request that the calling of men for military training should be suspended. The divisional boards have power to hear applications for postponements. Each board has jurisdiction to grant a postponement order when it is of the opinion that it is in the national interest to do so; and in the case of certain occupations, such as that of agriculture, the board is required to take into account the supply of labour which is available and the importance of the individual's occupation to the national economy. I am sure that the boards will take into account the matters to which the hon. member has referred when they deal with applications for postponements.

PRAIRIE FARM ASSISTANCE

INQUIRY WITH RESPECT TO ALLEGED DELAY IN PAYMENTS OF BONUS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. ROBERT FAIR (Battle River): I would like to address a question to the Minister of Agriculture. I have received letters to the effect that certain claims for bonus have been passed at Edmonton and forwarded to the treasury board for payment but that no settlement has yet been made. Could the minister explain the reason for the delay?

Hon. J. G. GARDINER (Minister of Agriculture): The plan which has been followed in connection with the making of wheat acreage reduction payments is that the Department of Agriculture shall have made inspections and rendered reports to the treasury officials, by whom, of course, the cheques are issued. Naturally, before those payments are made, there is a check with other reports which have been rendered by the farmers who have made the applications. This check is made with the prairie farm assistance returns and with the permits which have been issued by the wheat board, on both of which there are statements with regard to acreage. To speak in general terms, I would say that when the first applications came in, about forty per cent—I am speaking now from memory—of the applicants had returns on 1939 and 1940 and 1941 which were all alike.

They stated their acreages as the same for 1939, on returns made in 1941, as they did in 1939 and there was no difficulty about making these payments. Practically all these pay-