

the day are called I wish to direct the attention of the house to a newspaper report which appeared in the Toronto Daily Star of March 29, 1932, under the heading:

Will Bar Free State At Empire Conference  
If Oath Is Abandoned  
Consensus Of Opinion Among Government  
Officials At Ottawa  
Signal For Boycott

The article is as follows:

If the De Valera government persists in refusing the oath of allegiance to the King of England, officials of this dominion will refuse to permit the Irish Free State to sit at the council table of empire in Ottawa next July.

This was the informal consensus of opinion among high officials of the Canadian government here to-day. No official statement was issued by the government, but everywhere the De Valera attitude is a subject of discussion.

Canada's refusal to grant the Irish Free State a position at the imperial conference on inter-empire trade would, in effect, be the signal for a boycott of Ireland by all other parties to the conference.

As the Irish Free State's economic existence at present depends almost entirely on its relationship with the units of the empire, the sentiment of officials expressed here to-day is of great importance to the De Valera government.

It is admitted that an oath given without sincerity carries little or no weight, as an earnest of fulfilment, but repudiation of a solemn agreement arouses no enthusiasm in Canada, which could have saved millions within the last six months by repudiating Canadian gold obligations payable in New York.

That purports to have been sent from Ottawa and to indicate the opinion of high officials of the Canadian government. In fairness to the Under Secretary of State for External Affairs, and as a duty to the Dominion of Canada, I can say only this, that the correspondent of the Toronto Daily Star made some inquiries from Doctor Skelton who informed him, definitely and positively, that there was no warrant for any such statement being made. I can do no more than say that the appearance of reports such as the one I have just read emanating from Ottawa in the terms in which the alleged news is stated is calculated to do a very great injury to this country, and to prejudice inter-imperial relations.

May I say, Mr. Speaker, that the Canadian government fixed July 18 as an appropriate date upon which the Imperial economic conference might open. Communications were received from various dominions of the British Empire, including the United Kingdom, agreeing to that date. It was subsequently learned however that steamship connections were not all that might be desired for the opening on July 18, and accordingly on March 17 cables

were despatched inquiring whether or not July 21 would be a satisfactory date, inquiring as to the numbers comprising the delegations and indicating that Canada would be the host to those members who comprised the delegations. On March 18 Australia replied indicating the date would be entirely satisfactory. On March 23 the United Kingdom, South Africa, and New Zealand replied in the same sense. On March 30 Southern Rhodesia replied in the same sense, their representatives having a special position at the proposed conference. This morning a message was received, dated to-day, from Dublin reading as follows:

No. 3. Reference to your telegram economic conference. Many thanks for your very kind offer of hospitality which we accept with much pleasure. The change of dates suits our convenience. The number of our delegates and staff will be approximately twelve.

Minister for External Affairs,  
Irish Free State.

I need hardly remind the house that Mr. De Valera is the Minister for External Affairs of the Irish Free State. That completes the answers from the dominions of the empire including the United Kingdom. From Newfoundland a letter was received.

I make this statement in order to undo as quickly as possible any injury that may be done to the position of this country by reason of the despatch to which I have just referred.

## UNEMPLOYMENT AND FARM RELIEF

### CONTINUANCE ACT, 1932—CONSIDERATION OF BILL

The house resumed from Wednesday, March 30, consideration in committee of Bill No. 24, respecting unemployment and farm relief—The Prime Minister—Mr. Hanson (York-Sunbury) in the chair.

Mr. RALSTON: Mr. Chairman, last night I mentioned that I had another matter to bring to the attention of the committee. It has to do with work in one particular locality. I may say there are other works which are probably equally important, but I have received special representations with regard to this particular work, and I conveyed them both to my friend the Minister of Labour (Mr. Gordon) and my friend the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Stewart). Those representations had to do with the construction of a breakwater at Lower East Pubnico in Yarmouth county. It is represented that about forty families would be benefited by this work being undertaken. It was also represented that the work was very much needed on behalf of the fishermen. I need hardly remind