

The amendment does not constitute a blanket authority, as every crossing covered by such enabling legislation must be inspected by the board of transport commissioners, who must be satisfied with the safety measures provided at each crossing so designated.

Motion agreed to and bill read the first time.

DOMINION ELECTIONS ACT

INMATES OF INSTITUTIONS FOR THE POOR

Mr. ROBERT FAIR (Battle River) moved for leave to introduce Bill No. 4, to amend the Dominion Elections Act, 1938.

He said: This bill is exactly the same as bills I have introduced on other occasions, seeking to amend the Dominion Elections Act, 1938. The purpose is to remove the disqualification imposed on inmates of institutions for the poor where such persons are disqualified from voting at a provincial election. The removal of this disqualification will enable all such worthy persons to vote at federal elections whether they are qualified or not to vote at provincial elections.

The paragraph proposed to be repealed reads:

(k) in any province, every person who is an inmate of an institution which is maintained by any government or municipality for the housing and maintenance of the poor, if such person is by the law of that province disqualified from voting at an election of a member of the legislative assembly of that province, and did not serve in the military, naval or air forces of Canada in the war of 1914-1918.

The disqualification which I am trying to have removed is one that should have ceased to operate many years ago. We are supposed to be moving into a new world, and the fact that some people have been or are housed in any institution maintained by a municipality, county or province, should not disqualify them from voting at a dominion election. There are now only three provinces that adhere to the old law—Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Ontario—and they ought to be modernized by parliament so far as the Dominion Elections Act is concerned.

Motion agreed to and bill read the first time.

CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD ACT

COMMISSIONS TO AGENTS IN CONNECTION WITH SALE OF WHEAT

Mr. ROBERT FAIR (Battle River) moved for leave to introduce Bill No. 5 to amend the Canadian Wheat Board Act, 1935.

He said: This bill also is one that has been introduced before. It was talked out at the last session. I do not know what its fate

will be this session, but the purpose is to amend the Wheat Board Act of 1935. Under that legislation the wheat board is at present restricted and the board has to use the facilities already available for the sale of wheat, as provided by the Winnipeg Grain Exchange. In my opinion, and in the opinion of every farmer organization as well as of many other organizations in western Canada, this is not desirable, nor is it in the interests of the Canadian people as a whole. I should like to have the support of the house in order to have this bill carried at the present session.

Motion agreed to and bill read the first time.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT

AMENDMENT OF ACT RESPECTING MINISTERIAL HEAD

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Secretary of State for External Affairs) moved for leave to introduce Bill No. 6, to amend the Department of External Affairs Act.

He said: When the Department of External Affairs Act was passed in 1912 it was provided that the position of Secretary of State for External Affairs should be filled by the Prime Minister. That section still remains. The purpose of this bill is to revoke the section so that the position of Secretary of State for External Affairs may be filled by any member of the government.

Motion agreed to and bill read the first time.

WHEAT

INITIAL PAYMENTS FOR 1946 CROP

On the orders of the day:

Mr. J. A. ROSS (Souris): I should like to address a question to the Minister of Trade and Commerce. In order to assist Canadian farmers in formulating plans for seeding of the 1946 crop, will the minister state what the initial payments for 1946 wheat crop and other grains will be?

Hon. J. A. MacKINNON (Minister of Trade and Commerce): I spent the morning in a discussion with the Canadian wheat board and my colleagues of the wheat committee of the government, and I hope to be able to make a statement within a day or two.

GASOLINE

INCREASE IN MAXIMUM PRICE

On the orders of the day:

Mr. F. S. ZAPLITNY (Dauphin): I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Finance. In view of the widespread protest