

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, January 15, 1958

The house met at eleven o'clock.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

TABLING OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS AND AUDITOR GENERAL'S REPORT

Hon. Donald M. Fleming (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, may I inform the house that I have this morning tabled the annual report of the Auditor General and the public accounts in two volumes, English version, for the fiscal year ended March 31, 1957. I am sorry the French version of the report is not available yet and may not be available for another two or three weeks, due to the problem of translation and printing, but in view of the importance of the documents it was thought desirable that it should be tabled now without waiting until the French version was ready to be tabled.

Hon. J. W. Pickersgill (Bonavista-Twillin-gate): Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether I could ask the Minister of Finance if it is his intention to make the usual motion to refer these documents to the public accounts committee.

Mr. Fleming: Mr. Speaker, I think any such motion would have little meaning at this stage of the session. My hon. friend is aware that such a motion is normally made in the regular session of the year of tabling. If we were meeting in a normal session this would be the 1958 session and the tabling would take place early in that session. We are engaged in what we hope are the concluding days of the second session of 1957, and I think such a motion should properly be reserved until parliament convenes in the regular session of 1958.

Mr. Pickersgill: Needless to say I have no desire to press this point, because I am sure there is nothing wrong with the public accounts which are the accounts for our administration.

[Later:]

Mr. Fleming: Mr. Speaker, may I add to what I said earlier concerning the tabling of the public accounts. I have received a note asking if copies of the accounts are available for distribution. They are, Mr. Speaker; arrangements were made that copies will be available for distribution this morning upon request to hon. members and to the press gallery.

[Later:]

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Minister of Finance. Does the report of the Auditor General for the fiscal year 1956-57 which he tabled today contain reference to any unusual transactions or irregularities requiring comment by the government? If so, has such comment been prepared?

Mr. Speaker: Order. I submit to the hon. member for his consideration that he is asking for information which is readily available to all hon. members by perusing the document. It seems to me the question is not in order.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): I will ask my question after I have seen the document.

STARRED QUESTIONS

ATOMS FOR PEACE TREATY

Question No. 55—Mr. Hansell:

1. Was a treaty signed making Canada a partner in the "atoms for peace"? If so, when was this signed and by whom?
2. Who are the other signatories to the pact?
3. Was this brought before parliament for approval?

Hon. Sidney E. Smith (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the answer to the first part of the question is yes; Canada is a party to the convention establishing the statute of the international atomic energy agency signed at New York on October 26, 1956. The signatories for Canada were: Mr. M. H. Weirshof, in his capacity as head of the Canadian delegation to the conference on the statute of the international atomic energy agency; Mr. W. J. Bennett, as deputy head of the delegation; and Dr. R. A. MacKay, then permanent representative of Canada to the United Nations in New York.

In answer to the second part of the question, may I say that there are 77 other signatories, that is 78 including Canada. I could read the list, Mr. Speaker, but since it is rather long I wonder whether I might be permitted to present it to the Clerk to be printed in *Hansard* as part of my answer?

Mr. Speaker: Has the hon. member leave to have this part of his answer printed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.