

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, November 13, 1951

The house met at 2.30 p.m.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

REQUEST FOR EXPEDITION IN TABLING ORDERS FOR RETURNS

Mr. George A. Drew (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I think this would be the appropriate time for me to raise a question which I think should be raised. It has been brought to my attention that seven orders for returns, for which motions were passed by this house, are still outstanding. They cover a period going back to the first session of the present parliament, the last of them having been passed on June 25 of this year. Therefore not one of them is recent. I raise the question because it seems to me a practice has developed of permitting considerable delay in the filing of returns after the house has dealt with the questions. If there is any reason why the returns cannot be made, then it would seem that the appropriate time for that point to be raised is when the motion is before the house. However, if the motion is passed then I think everything possible should be done to comply with a motion which members of the house have supported.

One of the reasons why I am impressed with the necessity for consideration of this matter is that when the parliament came to an end there were forty-three orders for returns outstanding. Under our rules, as I understand the situation, with the termination of one parliament these motions and the orders made with respect thereto became ineffective. We have a situation where there are seven outstanding orders for returns going back to November 14, 1949, the date of the first one, and running through at different intervals up to June 25 of this year. I call this matter, through you, Mr. Speaker, to the attention of the government so that there may be a review of the orders outstanding, and I hope that by tomorrow we may have some assurance as to when these returns will be made.

Right Hon. L. S. St. Laurent (Prime Minister): I fully agree with the leader of the opposition with respect to everything he has said with the possible exception of the word "tomorrow". If he will be kind enough

to let me have a list of these returns I will make it my personal duty to inquire into the matter because I think returns should be brought down with due dispatch.

Mr. J. G. Diefenbaker (Lake Centre): On a question of privilege in connection with the same matter, on April 30, 1951, a question in my name was passed as an order for return. The question is as follows:

1. What lawyers practising in (a) Toronto; (b) Montreal; (c) Winnipeg, have performed legal services or have been retained as solicitors in any department of the government since the 31st of March, 1948?

2. How much was paid to each of the said lawyers?

That, sir, is six months ago, and while it may be a big job I think it should be completed within that period.

Mr. St. Laurent: I attended to that particular matter on three or four occasions and endeavoured to have the returns prepared in the various departments in the same form so they might be rather comparable. I inquired about it around a week ago, and I hope that we will have it completed. As the hon. member says, it requires a lot of research work. It is done by different officials in different departments, and their collation is not always put in the same form so that they do not appear to be comparable. I was endeavouring to have them put in a form that would appear to be most convenient in order to understand exactly what the situation was. As far as I was concerned, I found it would be much more helpful if they were in practically the same form in all departments.

Mr. Diefenbaker: They have always been in the same form.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

REQUEST FOR ENGLISH "HANSARD" INDEX FOR FIRST SESSION OF 1950

Mr. Jean François Pouliot (Temiscouata): Mr. Speaker, as you know, we have the index of French *Hansard* for the first session of 1950, and we have the indexes for the French and English *Hansards* of the special session of 1950. We have not yet the index of the English *Hansard* for 1950. I have already drawn your attention to this matter.

I wonder if the present staff compiling the English index is competent. If there is not sufficient staff to do the work which was