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DEFENCE OF CANADA REGULATIONS—AIR RAID
PRECAUTIONS

Mr. CHURCH:

For a copy of all orders in council, reports and other documents in the possession of the government relative to the defence of Canada regulations. Also a copy of all correspondence exchanged with the provinces relative to the enforcement of blackouts, covered by section 35 of the defence of Canada rules and regulations, as well as a copy of the order in council delegating this authority to provincial attorneys general instead of to the district military authorities.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): This motion refers to an order in council delegating authority to provincial attorneys general instead of to district military authorities. There is no such order in council. There is an instrument of delegation which I can table immediately. The correspondence will be somewhat voluminous, and to produce it may take some time.

Motion agreed to.

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND FERRY

INQUIRY AS TO SERVICE BETWEEN ISLAND AND
MAINLAND

On the orders of the day:

Hon. R. B. HANSON (Leader of the Opposition): I desire to call the attention of the Prime Minister and of the Minister of Transport, who I am sorry is not in his seat, to the situation which has arisen in connection with the car ferry service between Prince Edward Island and the mainland. I ask the house to bear with me while I give a brief recital of the present position as I see it.

On the 23rd instant, the day before yesterday, the ferry *Prince Edward Island* was held up at Borden with a leaky boiler, and there is now no conveyance by boat between the mainland and the island. All freight and passenger movement are held up, and the only chance to get on and off the island is by air. Just how long it will take to repair the boiler is not known. I am advised that last week there were over one hundred carloads of freight at Tormentine awaiting shipment to the island, and in addition to the ordinary shipments of live stock moving off the island, over two hundred reefer cars were required to ship potatoes to the United States. These potatoes represent a value to the farmers of approximately \$1,000 per car, and if the situation does not improve very shortly, a very severe loss will be sustained. I understand that the transportation committee of the Charlottetown board of trade met on the 23rd instant and passed a resolution, which was telegraphed to the Prime Minister, but so far as I know no answer has yet been received.

[Mr. Speaker.]

I placed some questions about this matter on the order paper for the purpose of eliciting some information, but the answers brought down on Monday last indicate that nothing is being done to improve the situation. Of course, when these questions were placed on the order paper the present ferry was not out of commission. I am also advised that if an order had been given in the United States for a new ferry within a reasonable time after the *Charlottetown* was lost, that order could have been filled, since they are filling orders over there for icebreakers and so on for the great lakes.

Will the Prime Minister, or the Minister of Transport, or in his absence the Minister of Munitions and Supply, who has had perhaps more to do with this matter than anyone else, indicate what is intended to be done to cope with the present situation, which is rapidly going from bad to worse, perhaps through no fault on the part of anyone in particular but because of delay in dealing with the situation.

Hon. C. D. HOWE (Minister of Munitions and Supply): This matter has been giving the government a great deal of concern. I presume that the Department of Munitions and Supply is the bottleneck. The position is that in order to rebuild this ferry we would have to give up a berth in one of our shipyards for a period of some fifteen months. We would have to divert sufficient steel to build probably two or three twin screw corvettes, which are badly needed; and considering the urgency of our naval requirements and of shipbuilding generally, we have not thought it advisable to do this.

My hon. friend is quite mistaken as to the possibility of having the ferry built in the United States. That possibility was explored immediately after the sinking. We scoured the second-hand market there, and looked into the position of the shipyards. At that time every shipyard was controlled by the government, and it was quite impossible to get a berth.

The service is carried on at the moment by a car ferry which handled the service until 1929, I think, and which is a perfectly good ferry. There are two car ferries on the run, but at present only one operates; and it is not unusual for the present ferry to carry on the service for six weeks or two months at this time of year. That ferry is operating. There was a short delay while a boiler was overhauled or repaired, but these things do occur when there is only one boat in operation, causing a temporary tie-up of cars. But unless this service has changed tremendously

880875

C273095

FEBRUARY 25, 1942

since earlier years the present car ferry should be able to handle the traffic with reasonable satisfaction to the people on the island. At this time of year, when the floe ice is heavy, the service always has been subject to short interruptions. It is not unusual to have a ferry go out to sea and be away for thirty-six hours before being able to dock on the other side; at least that has occurred more than once. In the meantime I would remind hon. members that a second service has been inaugurated between Wood island and Pietou, which I believe will relieve the situation considerably during the summer months.

I can assure every hon. member that the government is exceedingly anxious to rectify this situation, but at the moment that could be done only at great cost to our war effort. We are organized in one set of yards to build cargo boats, which we are launching every two months from every berth. It would perhaps mean losing eight or ten cargo vessels if we built a new ferry or, alternatively, losing two or three corvettes. In this period of war we must weigh the relative urgency of the needs in both directions, and that we have been doing. The moment we think we can spare a berth of any sort that can build a successor to the *Charlottetown*, the boat will be built. In the meantime a ferry has been found, I think in San Francisco or Los Angeles, which may be of some service as a stand-by boat. This is being examined very closely, and if it is found at all satisfactory it will be brought around and put on the service for such assistance as it is able to render.

CANADIAN ARMED FORCES

LEAVE FOR FARMERS' SONS—LENGTH OF
DEFERMENT OF SERVICE

On the orders of the day:

Mr. J. G. DIEFENBAKER (Lake Centre): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask a question of the Minister of National Defence, arising out of a very large number of communications I have been receiving from farmers located all across Canada, asking whether or not in view of the pronounced labour shortage which now exists on the farms it is the intention of the government to enable farmers' sons or others qualified to do farm work to go on leave, so that the spring work may be properly completed.

Hon. J. L. RALSTON (Minister of National Defence): Mr. Speaker, I can say that just at this instant I have not in mind any special or new policy with regard to that matter. It has each year been taken into consideration, having regard to the requirements of various units, and where they were placed, I may

say that with respect to certain units in certain locations it was impossible to make any substantial break in the ranks by the granting of leave. In other locations, and with respect to other units that was possible, and it has been done.

As I say, I have not at present in mind any general principle which could govern uniformly across Canada. But I assure my hon. friend the matter will have every study, and the very best possible will be done in order to make men available where they can be made available for the important work to which the hon. member has referred.

Mr. N. J. M. LOCKHART (Lincoln): Mr. Speaker, further to the question asked by the hon. member for Lake Centre (Mr. Diefenbaker), I will not attempt to read or to refer to the many communications I have received, but I should like to ask a further question of the minister, indicated in several of the communications I have received. Is there any possibility of the extension of the term of exemption to, say, one year, in connection with farmers' sons? I have some very urgent cases I could show the minister, and I shall be glad to do so. But could that term be extended so that it will cover the whole year?

An hon. MEMBER: What about conscription?

Mr. RALSTON: My hon. friend is referring to regulations made by the Department of National War Services rather than by the Department of National Defence. Furthermore, he will realize that what he is asking for is, in effect, direct exemption for one year for a certain class. That does not fit in very well with all that has been said with respect to the necessity for the utilization of man-power, and the effort for total war.

In so far as my department can be of service in working out any more equitable situation with respect to those on the farm, I shall be glad to see that its services are available, and that conferences and consultations are held. But I cannot say anything further than that. One cannot offhand and without due consideration indicate a new policy or draft a new regulation.

Mr. LOCKHART: I am not asking that extended exemption be given in general; that is not my point at all. But there are extreme cases. For instance, may farmers about to do their spring work be assured that they will have a continuance of at least a short exemption?

Mr. RALSTON: That is a matter, first, of regulation. The regulations provide that the period of exemption shall be six months. There