

Friday, February 9, 1923

The House met at three o'clock.

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES ACT AMENDMENT

Hon. Sir LOMER GOUIN (Minister of Justice) moved for leave to introduce Bill No. 7, to amend the Northwest Territories Act. He said: The purpose of this proposed legislation is to permit the trial outside of the Northwest Territories of persons charged with crimes committed within those territories, and to provide for such trial by the same court and according to the same procedure as if the trial took place within the said territories. The amendment is of particular importance in view of the necessity which confronts us of bringing to trial next summer a number of Eskimos charged with murders in different parts of the Northwest Territories. These Eskimos are now under guard at Herschell Island where we propose to try them on account of facilities which we find at that place for their confinement and trial. Furthermore, provision has to be made so that the decisions given pursuant to that new and large jurisdiction may be enforced, by execution or otherwise, at the place where they are made outside of the Northwest Territories.

Motion agreed to and bill read the first time.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

Mr. WILLIAM IRVINE (Calgary East) moved for leave to introduce Bill No. 8, to amend the Criminal Code. He said: The purpose of this bill is to abolish the death penalty for all crimes for which it may be imposed under the present criminal code, and to substitute therefor life imprisonment. I may add that the bill I am now introducing is exactly the same measure, in every particular, as the one which was introduced in this House by Mr. Bickerdike on February 9, 1915.

Motion agreed to and bill read the first time.

VIMY RIDGE MONUMENT

FRANCE'S GIFT OF MEMORIAL SITE GRATE- FULLY ACCEPTED

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, in the Speech which His Excellency the Governor General was pleased to make to both Houses of Parliament at the opening of the session, mention was made of a gift by the Republic of France [Sir Lomer Gouin.]

to the Dominion of Canada of a tract of land on Vimy Ridge. His Excellency referred to this gift in the following words:

The Government of France has graciously offered to the Canadian Government a tract of land of 250 acres on Vimy Ridge, at the site selected for the erection by Canada of a monument commemorating the exploits of Canadian troops in the Great War. This gift has been gratefully accepted, and a bill approving the agreement has been duly introduced in the French Parliament. An appropriate resolution expressing Canada's appreciation of the action of the French Government will be offered for your acceptance.

There would appear to be something peculiarly appropriate and gratifying in the circumstance that His Excellency, whose name and fame are so inseparably associated with the achievements of the Canadian army at Vimy Ridge, should be the one whose privilege it was to announce to the members of our parliament this gift of the Republic of France to the Dominion of Canada.

I have the honour, Mr. Speaker, to move:

That it be resolved by the House of Commons,

That Parliament do approve the acceptance by the Government of Canada of the gift graciously made by the Republic of France of a tract of land 250 acres in extent on Vimy Ridge at the site selected for the erection by Canada, of a monument commemorating the exploits of Canadian soldiers in the Great War and in so doing records its sense of gratitude for and its high appreciation of the motives which prompted France to associate herself with a project so dear to the hearts of the Canadian people.

Hon. members will recall that in the consideration last session of the appropriation for the Battlefields Memorial Commission a general wish was expressed by the leaders of the different parties in this House that if at all possible the commission should acquire a tract of land on Vimy Ridge which would form a suitable environment for the monument to be erected at that place in commemoration of the heroism of Canada's soldiers overseas. It was in pursuance of that wish that you, Mr. Speaker, during the interval since last session, visited France and conducted on behalf of the Battlefields Memorial Commission negotiations with the French government for the acquisition of this tract of land. The fact that we have received as a gift, what we should gladly have acquired by purchase, while due to the generosity of France, which we acknowledge in the fullest measure, is no doubt also due in part to your well-known tact and diplomacy in dealing with international affairs.

I would like to read to the House the text of the agreement with respect to this grant of land. The agreement was drafted on the 5th December, 1922, and concluded as between the French government, represented by Mr. Charles Reibel, Minister of Liberated Regions