

the other day had been referred to the Minister of Justice. As soon as I receive the final reply the question will be answered.

IMMIGRATION

INQUIRY AS TO POLICY WITH RESPECT TO COMMUNISTS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. A. L. SMITH (Calgary West): I should like to repeat a question I have asked for the last two days, as to what has been done or what is the government policy with respect to the exclusion of known communists at our ports of entry. The Secretary of State for External Affairs was kind enough to tell me that when the Minister of Mines and Resources returned I would have an answer; but surely, sir, this must be a matter of government policy, and surely somebody can answer the question. This is Thursday; tomorrow is Friday, and then we go into next week. I should like to be sure I get an answer this week.

Right Hon. L. S. ST. LAURENT (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I did not prepare any special answer to the question, but I can say this much. The sections of the act and the regulations have been under review by the members of the government in the light of known conditions with respect to certain persons who could be described as known communists, who were believed to be coming to Canada for the purpose of exercising here activities which under the Taft-Hartley Act they can no longer exercise in the United States. The decision has been that the immigration officers are to be asked or directed to take the view that under the existing law and regulations such persons are not admissible to Canada.

Mr. SMITH (Calgary West): Then may I ask a supplementary question, to make sure I understand the position. My impression has been that we have always had the authority, by statute or by regulation, and that there are now instructions that these shall be enforced. Is that the simple position?

Mr. ST. LAURENT: The position is simply that we have no more authority at the present time because of this view taken by the government than we had before, but that the present circumstances, known to us at this time, seem to make the law and the regulations applicable in such a way as to prevent the granting of entry to Canada to such persons.

Mr. SMITH (Calgary West): In short, we have always had the authority but have not used it?

Mr. ST. LAURENT: We always had the authority if we had the evidence that the individual to whom it was to be applied came within the terms of the statute and regulations, and we now feel there are a number of persons with respect to whom we have that evidence.

Mr. THATCHER: Then I should like to ask a supplementary question. Has the government recently taken any steps to cancel the immigration permits of American communist labour leaders already in Canada?

Mr. ST. LAURENT: I am afraid that is a matter of departmental administration, and I would not like to speak from what is my general impression. I would wish to have that impression confirmed by the officers of the immigration branch. I will ask them for accurate information about it. I hope the minister will be in his seat tomorrow. If he is not I shall endeavour to obtain the information from his department.

Mr. SMITH (Calgary West): You might include England; I am thinking of Pollitt.

Mr. ROWE: In view of this question as to the entry of communists into Canada, would the minister tell us what types of communists, different from those already here, might be kept out?

Mr. ST. LAURENT: I should not like to express any opinion with respect to a comparison between individuals in Canada and those outside.

PENSION ACT

RATES OF PENSION FOR DISABILITY AND DEATH—SALARIES OF PENSION COMMISSIONERS

Hon. MILTON F. GREGG (Minister of Veterans Affairs) moved the second reading of Bill No. 126, to amend the Pension Act.

He said: Mr. Speaker, in submitting this bill for second reading I shall try this afternoon to confine my remarks to points related directly to the bill and of interest in general to all members of the house, since a more detailed examination will, I hope, be possible by the members of the select committee.

It is a bill proposing certain amendments. The general principle I think might be indicated as follows: a greater degree of compensation to those who have suffered on account of disability or death due to war services in the armed forces of our country. The bill is designed to increase that compensation and to effect other changes intended to improve the administration of the Pension Act.