

Newfoundland

Prime Minister on February 12, 1947, about the principles which would govern the arrangements for military co-operation between the two countries. Those principles were agreed to by the two governments. They were announced simultaneously by the President and by the Prime Minister. I believe they have received pretty universal approval throughout the United States and Canada. It is our hope that in our negotiations with the government of the United States we shall have the actual exercise of the rights provided for by these leases brought into line with the principles which have been set out in this joint declaration. We hope that will be so because of the attitude of the two governments of Canada and the United States. Their practice has not been to deal with each other at arm's length, but rather to try to make arrangements which would afford the most satisfactory method and degree of co-operation between the peoples of the two countries.

We hope it will be possible to have the lessees, who by contract have their rights for ninety-nine years in these leases, agree that they should exercise their rights in the manner which the two governments of Canada and the United States agreed would be the proper way to ensure co-operation between them as set out in their joint declaration of February 12, 1947. The hon. member for Broadview may be assured that I hope to be able to discuss with the President of the United States some aspects of these leases on the occasion of the visit I am to have the honour of paying him on this very week end.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) feels that the entry of Newfoundland into confederation and the presence of six senators and seven members of parliament in addition to the present membership of our houses of parliament is going to place a serious burden upon the restricted office space available in this central block. I think everyone who occupies any portion of the central block will be in full agreement with him as to the facts.

His suggestion that space should be made in the east block for the hon. members of the other house would seem to indicate that he does not realize to what extent there is already congestion in the space available in the east block for the services located there. I was Secretary of State for External Affairs for well over a year before I could get space in the east block. During that period I had to use as my office the one that was available for me during the session in the centre block.

Mr. Cruickshank: Put them in the printing bureau.

[Mr. St. Laurent.]

Mr. St. Laurent: The suggestion is made that they might be put in the printing bureau, but those who have visited the printing bureau know that there is such congestion there that a large part of the work which should be done by the king's printer has to be let out by private contract. Hon. members are aware of the serious difficulties which arise in providing additional buildings for government services in this capital district. There are urgently required in the capital district more buildings for the housing of government services.

Up to the present time it has been felt that it would be unfair to take any building materials or manpower which could be used for the provision of houses and devote them to the construction of government buildings. But there has been some easing in the supply situation. Hon. members are aware that for the last week or so there has been quite a controversy here in Ottawa as to where the additional buildings are going to be located.

The matter was submitted to the federal district commission and to the planning commission. They were told that the three services that require new accommodation were the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of Trade and Commerce and the printing bureau. They looked over the field and found two sites in Ottawa and one in Hull. One site in Ottawa was opposite the supreme court building on Wellington street and it was decided that that should be used for a building for the Department of Veterans Affairs. They recommended that the other site in Ottawa west should be devoted to the building for the Department of Trade and Commerce and that the printing bureau, which requires a large site—I am told it will have a frontage of seven hundred feet and a depth of three hundred and fifty feet—should be located in the city of Hull.

Mr. Knowles: Let the senators go to Hull.

Mr. St. Laurent: The provision of additional accommodation for government services is necessary in order to relieve congestion throughout the whole service. If accommodation is made available for the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Trade and Commerce it will relieve congestion in the space available for the houses of parliament. The project I hear discussed most frequently for the housing of hon. gentlemen of the other place is the east block. The west block is the one I hear discussed as being the proper location for additional offices for members of parliament. I feel it is urgent that more space be provided for hon. members. This is something which is receiving active consideration, not only out of concern for the comfort of others but