

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, March 11, 1948

The house met at three o'clock.

HOUSE OF COMMONS

POST OFFICE—DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER

Mr. FREDERIC DORION (Charlevoix-Saguenay): Mr. Speaker, I rise to a question of privilege. A few days ago many members, and I was one of them, received through the post office of the House of Commons a copy of the communist newspaper *Combat*. The envelopes containing that paper, like the one I hold in my hand, did not bear any post office mark, contrary to section 275 of the post office regulations, which reads as follows—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order. I would ask the hon. member to state his question of privilege.

Mr. DORION: I am about to do so, Mr. Speaker, but I submit that on a question of privilege we are entitled to explain why we raise the question. The section to which I refer reads:

Postmasters should be careful to postmark distinctly all letters, registered or ordinary, posted or received at their offices, and to effectually cancel all stamps thereon.

As the envelopes we received did not bear any postmark as required by the rules, we cannot identify the post office they were mailed at or where they came from.

It is stated in that newspaper that it was published in Montreal, but we cannot ascertain where it was mailed.

My point of privilege, Mr. Speaker, is that our mail boxes are not rubbish cans and that they should be used only in accordance with the post office regulations.

DEBATES BRANCH—REPORT OF CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

Mr. SPEAKER: I have the honour to lay on the table of the house a report of the civil service commission relating to the appointment of Miss M. E. Black to a permanent position in the debates branch of the House of Commons.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

BANKING AND COMMERCE—FIRST AND SECOND REPORTS—CONCURRENCE IN FIRST REPORT

Mr. HUGHES CLEAVER (Halton) presented the first and second reports of the standing committee on banking and commerce, and moved that the first report be concurred in.

Motion agreed to.

NEWFOUNDLAND

QUESTIONS SUBMITTED TO CANADIAN GOVERNMENT AND ANSWERS THERETO

Right Hon. L. S. ST. LAURENT (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Yesterday there was a question on the order paper by the hon. member for Broadview (Mr. Church) with respect to developments in connection with the possible entry of Newfoundland into confederation, and I asked that it be allowed to stand. As I understand that the Prime Minister has information to communicate to the house today, before that is done, I should like to table copies of certain additional questions that were submitted to the Canadian government by the governor of Newfoundland, and copies of the answers that were given to those questions.

ANNOUNCEMENT OF REFERENDUM ON FUTURE FORM OF GOVERNMENT

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I might give the house immediately the statement to which my hon. friend the Secretary of State for External Affairs has just referred.

We have been advised by the United Kingdom government that a statement is to be issued today in Newfoundland announcing that the people of Newfoundland will be given the opportunity shortly to vote in a referendum on their future form of government. Three questions will be submitted to the people: continuation of commission government for a five-year period; restoration of responsible government as it existed in 1933 prior to the establishment of commission of