

THE SENATE

Friday, February 18, 1949

The Senate met at 3 p.m., the Speaker in the Chair.

Prayers and routine proceedings.

THE ROYAL ASSENT

The Hon. the Speaker informed the Senate that he had received a communication from the Assistant Secretary to the Governor General, acquainting him that the Right Honourable Thibaudeau Rinfret, acting as Deputy of His Excellency the Governor General, would proceed to the Senate Chamber this day at 5.45 p.m., for the purpose of giving the Royal Assent to a certain bill.

**STATUTE LAW AMENDMENT
(NEWFOUNDLAND) BILL**

FIRST READING

A message was received from the House of Commons with Bill 12, an Act to amend the Statute Law.

The bill was read the first time.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Mr. Robertson: Honourable senators, pursuant to verbal notice given yesterday, I move that when the Senate adjourns today it do stand adjourned until Tuesday, March 8, at 8 o'clock in the evening.

The motion was agreed to.

IMMIGRATION

MOTION

Hon. Cairine Wilson moved:

That the Standing Committee on Immigration and Labour be authorized and directed to examine into the Immigration Act (R.S.C. Chapter 93 and amendments) its operation and administration and the circumstances and conditions relating thereto including:—

(a) the desirability of admitting immigrants to Canada.

(b) the type of immigrant which should be preferred, including origin, training and other characteristics.

(c) the availability of such immigrants for admission.

(d) the facilities, resources and capacity of Canada to absorb, employ and maintain such immigrants, and

(e) the appropriate terms and conditions of such admission;

And that the said committee report its findings to this house;

And that the said committee have power to send for persons, papers and records.

She said: Honourable senators, I am indebted to the honourable senator from

Toronto-Trinity (Hon. Mr. Roebuck) for the wording of this motion. On three separate occasions he has moved that the Committee on Immigration and Labour be given the powers set out in this motion.

The Committee on Immigration and Labour has now held meetings during the sessions of 1946, 1947 and 1948, and has, it believes, performed valuable work in studying the position of possible immigrants in many parts of the world, particularly in the occupied zones of Europe, where there are hundreds of thousands of persons who are unwilling or unable to return to their countries of origin and whose only hope for the future lies in re-settlement in a friendly country where they may begin life anew.

On July 1, 1947, the Preliminary Committee for the International Refugee Organization assumed responsibility for the displaced persons who had previously been under the care of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Association, which continued to function until the International Refugee Organization was officially established on August 20, 1948. The constitution of the I.R.O. required ratification by fifteen nations and stipulated that these fifteen nations should contribute 75 per cent of the necessary operational funds before the organization could undertake autonomous operations. Denmark was the fifteenth country to ratify the constitution, which has since been ratified by a sixteenth, Venezuela. Eight other countries have signed the constitution of the I.R.O., but have not as yet completed ratification.

The I.R.O. headquarters are at Geneva where the Director-General is an American, W. Hallam Tuck, whose deputy, Sir Arthur Rucker, has been seconded from his post as Deputy Secretary of the British Ministry of Health. Both had served with the P.C.I.R.O. in similar capacities.

During the period from July 1 to August 31, 1948, a total of 236,249 displaced persons and refugees departed from areas in which the I.R.O. operated to find new homes in more than seventy countries. Despite this, however, on August 31, the I.R.O. was still providing assistance to 675,989 refugees and displaced persons. The problem is gigantic, and has been aggravated during the past year by those who continue to escape from countries of Eastern Europe and who look for aid and sympathy from our own freedom-loving people.

One of the most interesting operations under the I.R.O. is the International Tracing Service, which attempts to discover what has happened to some, at least, of the hundreds of thousands of people who vanished during World War II. This branch of the I.R.O. has become an immense bureau of missing persons, handling as many as 6,000 cases a month