

a member of the House who desired to make a motion an opportunity to do so. But, on the other hand, if an effort were made to start the estimates of any department on Thursday or Friday it could only be done by the unanimous consent of the House. That has always been my interpretation of the rule. The unanimous consent did not refer to the fact that the Speaker might or might not leave the Chair, but it referred to the fact that the estimates of a department must be first taken up on some other day than Thursday or Friday unless by the unanimous consent of the House. With the unanimous consent of the House they may be taken up on any day. I understood the leader of the Government to say at that time that at any time the Opposition desired to move a motion on going into Committee of Supply, there would be no objection to their doing so. That is my understanding of the matter. In pursuance of that opinion, if it is the expressed desire of the House that any member of the House should make a motion and discuss it to-day, I would not feel that I would be justified in refusing to receive it.

It is moved by Mr. Foster, seconded by Mr. Reid, that I do now leave the Chair for the House to go into Committee of Supply.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: Carried.

Motion agreed to.

SUPPLY.

The House in Committee of Supply, Mr. Blondin in the Chair.

Mr. A. K. MACLEAN: Would the Minister of Trade and Commerce place on the table a copy of the contract recently made with the Royal Mail Steam Packet Company for the West India service?

Mr. FOSTER: I shall do so, before the departmental Estimates are taken up.

Department of Labour—Conciliation and Labour Act, including publication, printing, binding and distribution of the Labour Gazette and allowance to correspondents, and for clerical assistance in preparing tables of statistics, \$30,000.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: Would the minister give us some information as to the working of the Conciliation Act?

Mr. CROTHERS: There has not in my time been any proceeding under the Conciliation and Labour Act. On one occasion there was an application made concerning

the Intercolonial railway but the difficulty was adjusted and no board was appointed. Speaking generally I find that both parties to these disputes prefer proceedings under the Industrial Disputes Act, which they consider more direct and more satisfactory.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: There unfortunately has been a strike on Vancouver Island and a commission was appointed by the Government to make inquiry. Would the minister give us information as to that?

Mr. CROTHERS: The first intimation I had of any difficulty on Vancouver Island was contained in a press despatch which appeared in one of the Ottawa papers on the 19th of September, 1912, stating that at the Cumberland mines some 1,500 miners had gone out on strike. Upon seeing that despatch I at once sent the following telegram:—

Ottawa, September 19, 1912.

Peter McNiven,
Secretary, United Mine Workers' Lodge,
Cumberland, B.C.

My attention has been drawn to newspaper despatches announcing the occurrence of coal miners' strike at Cumberland mines. The Industrial Disputes Investigation Act provides means for possible settlement of all matters in dispute by reference to an impartial board of three members, on which company and workmen concerned may each have a representative of their own selection. Law does not compel acceptance of board findings but forbids strikes or lockouts pending inquiry under severe penalties. In present case requirements of the Act do not appear to have been satisfied, and I am desirous of learning particulars of dispute by telegram without delay. Department will furnish any fuller explanation of Industrial Disputes law which may be required, and is to-day mailing you copies of this law and forms of application thereunder. In the event of proper application being made, everything possible will be done to expedite procedure under Act.

T. W. Crothers,
Minister of Labour.

It appears that Peter McNiven, to whom the telegram was addressed, and whose name we got from the officers of the different unions throughout the country, had been superseded by a man named McAllister, and the telegram was handed to McAllister, as secretary of the lodge. The next day, September 20, I received this reply:—

Cumberland, B.C., September 20.
Hon. T. W. Crothers,
Minister of Labour,
Ottawa.

There is no strike declared at Cumberland mines. The company have openly discriminated against men who were taking an active part in union organization. They have also refused