

of Quebec on this side and we have some little work to do in the courts before the long vacation sets in.

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: We will go on, and later we will endeavour to give an opportunity to hon. gentlemen to discuss the matter.

Mr. BUREAU: If that is understood it is all right.

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: Indeed, if there is any clause that is passed and there is a desire to reconsider it I do not think there would be any objection to going back to it even if it were formally passed.

Mr. MCKENZIE: Perhaps the minister would explain the Bill a little more?

Mr. ROWELL: The object of this Bill is to continue the work which has been carried on during the greater part of the war period by the War Purchasing Commission. The intention of the Government is to make sure that in future the purchase of all supplies required by the various departments of the Government shall be made through a purchasing commission of business men with tenders called for from the business men of the country and wholly apart from personal or political influences. The members will recall that in May, 1915, an Order in Council was passed creating what was known as the War Purchasing Commission. The Order in Council provides that:

All purchases of clothing, equipment, arms, guns, ammunition, horses, munitions and materials of war and supplies of every kind, and all contracts for such purposes, and all contracts for transportation, payable out of the funds appropriated by the War Appropriation Act, 1915, or out of the funds appropriated by any other Act for the purpose enumerated in the War Appropriation Act, 1915, shall be made by the commission or made under its direction and control, and the commission is hereby empowered on behalf of the Government to make such purchases and to enter into or direct and control the making of such contracts.

Under that Order in Council Sir Edward Kemp, Mr., afterwards Sir, Hormisdas Laporte, and Mr. George Frederick Galt, of Winnipeg, were appointed members of this commission. The commission carried on its work of purchasing all war supplies and all supplies purchased out of the War Appropriation Fund, until the autumn of 1917, without any change in personnel. Sir Edward Kemp, upon being appointed Overseas Minister of Militia, resigned the chairmanship of the War Purchasing Commission and also resigned his membership in it. Sir Hormisdas Laporte was appointed chairman, and

[Mr. Bureau.]

Mr. W. P. Gundy, of Toronto, succeeded Sir Edward Kemp on the commission. The commission as reconstituted conducted its work under this original Order in Council without substantial change until the spring of 1918. In the month of February, 1918, the powers of the commission were enlarged so as to cover the purchasing in all departments of the Government, with the single exception of that of Government railways. An Order in Council was passed on the 6th February, 1918. The recital gives the reasons not only for the Order in Council, but also for the present legislation, so that I may be permitted to read one or two clauses from it:

And whereas the Prime Minister is of the opinion that the provisions of the above mentioned Orders in Council and the functions of the War Purchasing Commission might with advantage be extended to all purchases by the several departments of the Government for any purpose, whether connected with the prosecution of the war or otherwise, subject to the provisions hereinafter set forth:

And whereas the Prime Minister observes that the establishment of the War Purchasing Commission has resulted in a very great saving of public moneys, as well as in the abolition of patronage in respect of purchases for the war and it is important to extend this system as widely as possible, pending consideration of permanent provision for that purpose after fuller study and consideration of the problems involved.

Under the original Order in Council it was provided that purchases should be made by or under the direction and control of the commission. In carrying on the work the commission have acted under the latter part of this clause, viz.: the purchases have been made under the direction and control of the commission, with the results outlined by the Prime Minister in the recital to the Order in Council of February, 1918.

This commission was appointed for the period of the war and the members served in an honorary capacity. They have all given their services to the country without any compensation whatever, and I am sure the members of the House will feel that the House owes an expression of appreciation to those public-spirited business men for the faithful and efficient service they have given to the country in this important branch of the public service. It is a matter of great regret to the Government, as I am sure it will be to the House, that one of the members of the commission, Mr. Gundy, of Toronto, died very unexpectedly some ten days ago, while in the service of the country, and the commission has lost the benefit of his valuable services. He was deeply interested in the work of the com-