

advantage of by what I might call the interests that are to be investigated? Is that the meaning?

Mr. BUREAU: If my right hon. friend will allow me, there is a rule of the House which provides that, when a minister of the Crown desires to lay on the Table a return which is not the subject of an order a motion for return may be opposed on the ground of public policy. Such, for instance, as that it is not in the public interest. The object of Mr. Preston's inquiry was to find out whether there was ground for an investigation by a commission.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Was Mr. Preston appointed under the Inquiries Act?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: He was appointed by the Minister of Trade and Commerce to gather information with a view to ascertaining, in the first instance, whether the government would be justified in going the length of appointing a royal commission to make this inquiry.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I do not know what statutory authority there could have been for his appointment as investigator, and the payment of salary, unless it was under the Inquiries Act.

Mr. BUREAU: That is not the question I am discussing now. The question is whether it is in the public interest to disclose the report made by Mr. Preston, and the ground taken by the government is this. We desired first to know whether there was ground for an investigation, as the result of complaints made by shippers that they were not being treated properly by carriers. We did not want to go to the expense of having a commission appointed to go fishing, as was so often the case in past years, and so Mr. Preston was appointed to make a preliminary report. We have this report, and we do not think it is in the public interest, and I think my hon. friend would agree with me, that the facts on which we decided that an investigation should be held should be given to the press at this time to inflame public opinion. Their publication would, of course, give rise to a general discussion by the public. If you are going to apprehend somebody, you do not advertise that fact. You do not tell a smuggler that you are going to the magistrate to get a warrant out. The Prime Minister has already stated that when the commission makes its report, the facts upon which we saw fit to have a commission appointed will be made public and if the facts given by Mr. Preston do not justify the appointment of a commission, then will be the time to criticise.

Mr. BAXTER: I do not want to appear in any false position with regard to this. I have asked for information that I think the House is entitled to. If the Prime Minister is putting it on the ground that it is against the public interest to make this disclosure, I can understand that. He and his government will take the responsibility and they will be perfectly correct in that course. But what I do not understand is why the first answer should have been that the publication of the report might injure the accused, and the second answer be that to bring down this report might help the accused to get some information.

Mr. GRAHAM: Both are possible.

Mr. BAXTER: My object, as one member of this parliament, was if there are combines or irregularities going on, to help bring the facts to the light, and I want to know what is being done towards that end. If it is not in the public interest that I should know at this time, I am content to let the motion drop.

Motion dropped.

UNOPPOSED MOTIONS FOR PAPERS

NOVA SCOTIA—RULE OF ROAD

Sir HENRY DRAYTON:

For a copy of all papers, correspondence, letters, documents, and other writings relating to the disallowance of an act of the legislature of Nova Scotia changing the Rule of the Road, and for a copy of the opinion of the Department of Justice respecting the question of disallowing such legislation.

NOVA SCOTIA STATUTE

Sir HENRY DRAYTON:

For a copy of all papers, correspondence, letters, documents, and other writings relating to the disallowance of a statute of the legislature of Nova Scotia, being Chapter 177 of the statutes enacted in the year 1921, and entitled "An Act to Vest Certain Lands in Victoria County in Jane E. MacNeil."

P.C. 1566

Mr. BLACK (Yukon):

For a return showing:

1. The record of the proceedings of a sub-committee of the Privy Council appointed under P.C. 1566, May 12, 1921, to whom was referred the matter of arriving at a scale of fees charged by the government for licenses, permits, leases, etc.
2. The reports and recommendations of all department officers made to council or to any minister concerning said matter.
3. The names and offices held by all departmental officers who inquired into and reported on said subject.
4. The report recommending the scale of fees charged by the government for recording transfers and other documents under the regulations governing quartz mining claims in Yukon Territory.