

and the Prime Minister in particular to give consideration to devising some method by which the business of the country may be dealt with in more orderly fashion and particularly to avoid the consideration of so many estimates for the first time at the very tail end of the session. I have some suggestions in that regard which I shall be glad to make later on to the Prime Minister and the Speaker, and which I hope will be constructive. I believe there is a way out and I think parliament ought to find the most reasonable way of dealing with this situation.

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Prime Minister): I may say to my hon. friend in regard to reappointing a committee to revise the rules that, as he is aware, we have had two such committees, in the two previous sessions and, as my hon. friend has just observed, there did not seem to be that measure of agreement between hon. members that one would have wished to see. The government has considered this matter, and we have thought that for this session it might be preferable to adopt the practice that has been followed in the United Kingdom, of passing, where it is thought necessary or advisable, what are known as sessional orders; that is to say, from time to time special resolutions which will govern procedure on the matters for one session only. In that way it will be possible to test out how a particular order may work. If it is found that it works satisfactorily, it is altogether probable that the rules would be amended in accordance with what had proven to be a wise course to follow. That is the view which the government holds at the moment. In the light of what my hon. friend has said, we would of course be happy to reconsider all aspects of it.

As to the question of arranging the business of the house in as orderly a fashion as possible, I would say that I thought the conference which was held the other day in my office with the leader of the opposition and the leaders of the other parties was a good beginning in that direction—I hope that we may have meetings of that kind as the session goes on with a view to trying to arrange the business so that it will be proceeded with as rapidly and as orderly as possible.

As to the estimates, I have nothing to say at the moment beyond this, that it is a matter to which we shall also be glad to give consideration.

[Mr. Graydon.]

LABOUR CONDITIONS

THREATENED STRIKE OF COAL MINERS IN NOVA SCOTIA

On the orders of the day:

Mr. CLARENCE GILLIS (Cape Breton South): May I be permitted to direct a question to the Minister of Labour? I did not send him notice of the question.

Mr. BRADETTE: The hon. member is starting a little early.

Mr. GILLIS: Not any earlier than others; it may be a little more embarrassing.

Mr. MITCHELL: It is not embarrassing to me.

Mr. GILLIS: I did not send the minister notice because I had not intended to ask the question, but since the house opened I have received a telegram requesting that I get some information on the matter. Is the minister in a position to inform the house what progress his department has made in resolving the difficulties which exist in the maritime coal mining industry? If he cannot answer now, will he consider making a statement on Monday?

Hon. HUMPHREY MITCHELL (Minister of Labour): I will answer it now. It is like a chicken that wants to lay an egg. You cannot do anything about it; she is going to lay it.

Mr. COLDWELL: Some chicken! Some egg!

Mr. MITCHELL: This dispute did not come under my jurisdiction until the 24th day of this month. I understand that the miners and the operators had met twice before and did not reach a settlement. I met both parties on and off for three days. As my hon. friend knows probably as well as I do, traditionally for the last thirty years disputes in the coal mining industry have been settled through the medium of a board of conciliation.

Mr. GILLIS: Except during the war.

Mr. MITCHELL: Except during the war, and my good friend did not like some of the boards we set up at that time. I told the parties to the dispute that these boards having been successful in Nova Scotia, I saw no reason why they could not be just as successful in this case. I suggested the setting up of a board in Nova Scotia where the economics, the wages of the miners and all the issues involved, might be given to the public. That is the place where it should be done, rather than in Ottawa.