

Motions for Papers

which is to be copied and brought down. In these matters there is no desire on the part of the government to conceal or hold back any information, but of necessity there must be, or should be, discretion exercised on the part of the minister in respect to the amount of work involved in different returns.

Mr. GRAYDON: I might say something on that point. I have no doubt that as a rule hon. members who ask questions or have motions on the order paper for the production of papers are not familiar with how much work the preparation of the return will actually involve. Until such time as the motion appears on the order paper and the full information is asked for it is difficult for a private member to assess the exact relationship of certain correspondence to the general subject to which he is referring. In answer to the remarks of the Prime Minister with respect to this matter, I would say that if there is a great deal of correspondence which is of a similar nature to that which has preceded it, there might be some way of having reference made to that fact on the return so that a great volume of material need not be copied out at public expense. I would thoroughly agree with that. On the other hand it must be remembered that, once a return is passed, it is not merely for the private information of some hon. member. It is for the information of the house and of the public. We must bear that in mind in connection with the answer which the Prime Minister has made.

Mr. HOMUTH: I think if the Prime Minister will read that question over he will find that it deals only with the official documents as between the strikers, the negotiators and his department.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: What I was saying really had reference to several of the motions.

REPORT OF MR. JUSTICE BARLOW ON STEEL
INDUSTRY

Mr. STOKES:

For a copy of the report of the commission investigating conditions in the steel industry, which was headed by Mr. Justice Barlow, together with a copy of the minority report.

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION—GENERAL
MANAGER

Mr. CARDIFF:

For a copy of all letters, telegrams, memoranda or other documents passing between the chairman of the board of governors of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, or any member of that board or any official of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, and the [Mr. Mackenzie King.]

Prime Minister, or any member of his staff, the clerk of the privy council, the Minister of National War Services, or any official of his department, the Minister of Munitions and Supply or any official of his department, or the Minister of Transport or any official of his department, with respect to the retirement of Major Gladstone Murray from the position of general manager of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, his appointment as director of broadcasting of the said corporation, the appointment of the Rev. J. S. Thomson to succeed him as general manager, and the salaries to be paid to the said persons and to the assistant general manager of the said corporation.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: With regard to this and certain other motions, it is generally recognized that communications between a minister of the crown and officials of the government are privileged and that it is within the discretion and also the responsibility of a minister to decide whether such communications should or should not be brought down in a return. Take for example a matter which has to be decided by a minister, involving communications which he receives from members of his staff. Unless it were understood that communications of the sort would be privileged, many communications would be drafted, not so much with a view to giving a minister the exact information he would wish to have as with a view to having the communication in a form in which it might be made public. That is quite obvious, and therefore it has always been understood that communications between departmental officials and heads of departments are privileged. In regard to the particular request in this motion, there may be communications concerning the appointment of one person or the retirement of another to the bringing down of which there could be no objection. But in other cases there are communications, which I can think of, wherein the government has sought to get information with respect to say some matter to be considered by the cabinet. It would certainly not do to have communications of that character brought down.

Here too it is necessary to consider what I mentioned a moment ago, about the amount of time and expense involved in seeking to provide information. This may be a matter largely of procedure. The government might say, with respect to bodies such as the CBC, we will consider only such questions as are placed upon the order paper in the first instance and refuse to provide a committee by which information in detail may be obtained. On the other hand, the government might take the view, that a committee of the house should be appointed to look into certain matters and that all information must be elicited before that committee. I do not