

gram I received yesterday, and to ask a question with regard thereto. The telegram is as follows:

Prince Albert, Sask., June 4, 1919.

E. Lapointe,  
Ottawa, Ont.

Mass meeting of strikers held here this morning endorse your actions and are heartily in sympathy with proposal to hold conference of all concerned. Immediate action necessary to prevent further trouble.

(Sgd) Davis.

As this telegram indicates that labour representatives will be agreeable to the summoning of a large industrial conference of employers and employees, as has been suggested in this House, would the Prime Minister state whether the Government is considering calling such a conference?

Sir ROBERT BORDEN (Prime Minister): I can answer my hon. friend at once. I delayed giving any definite statement on the subject until I had had opportunity of conferring with the Minister of Labour (Mr. Robertson). Immediately on his return from Winnipeg I took the matter up with him and he informed me, as I have already stated in the House, that during the past winter and spring he has had many conferences both with employers and employed, and it was because of the suggestion received by him from the employers on the one hand, and from the employed on the other, that he suggested the appointment by Government of the Industrial Commission which is now engaged in investigating these questions in different parts of Canada. Suggestions both as to the scope of the commission and as to its personnel were presented to him by the employers and by the employed. He took all those suggestions into consideration, and I think he gave to both employers and employed the representation which they themselves had proposed. That commission will report, I hope, in a few days. It is understood that immediately on their return on the 15th of June they will make a brief report, to be followed at an early date by a fuller report. The Minister of Labour has the view, which I share, that pending the reception of that report and the information which it will afford, it would be unwise to call the general conference proposed.

There is much, however, which commends itself to my judgment in the suggestion for a general conference, and I can assure my hon. friend that immediately the work of that commission has been completed, and the results of their labours com-

municated to the Government, most attentive consideration, and I am inclined to think favourable consideration will be given to the suggestion contained in the telegram my hon. friend has just read.

#### PURCHASING OF DEPARTMENTAL AND OTHER SUPPLIES.

Hon. N. W. ROWELL (President of the Privy Council) moved the second reading of Bill No. 46, respecting the purchasing of departmental and other supplies and materials for His Majesty.

Mr. JACQUES BUREAU (Three Rivers and St. Maurice): This is a very important Bill and a good many hon. members have expressed a desire to speak on it. With so many members away on a Friday, I think it is a bad day to take up the Bill. Many hon. members are engaged in law business, and this is the last month before vacation.

If it were possible for the minister to put it off until Monday or Tuesday it would meet the wishes of members on this side of the House.

Mr. ROWELL: This Order has been on the Paper for some time. My suggestion would be that we go on with the second reading and I will leave the Bill in the committee, leaving the clause that relates to the salaries of the commissioners open; in fact, I must do that because the resolution covering salaries must be passed before that can be dealt with. Under these circumstances, any discussion that members may wish to have upon it may be had on that section. We can go on with the Bill this afternoon and get through with the rest of it.

Mr. BUREAU: Is it understood that the principle of the Bill can be discussed on that particular section? I have been informed by a good many members that they desired to speak on the question.

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: It is rather inconvenient to discuss the principle of a Bill in Committee. Are there many gentlemen away this afternoon?

Mr. BUREAU: A good many of them.

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: Why are they not here?

Mr. BUREAU: I will tell my right hon. friend why. We are in a rather difficult position. We have to attend a little bit to our business. We have not obstructed the business of the House very much so far. It is known that Friday is an off day. We are practically all from the province