

MANUFACTURE AND SALE OF OPIUM  
PROHIBITION BILL.

SECOND READING.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT moved the second reading of Bill (205) 'An Act to prohibit the importation, manufacture and sale of opium for other than medicinal purposes.'

Hon. Sir MACKENZIE BOWELL—I put a notice upon the paper to-night asking for the correspondence submitted for and against the Bill, and I should like very much to have that correspondence before final action is taken. Not that I am opposed to the principle of the Bill, but I think it is one that requires a very great deal of consideration as it is virtually a Bill of confiscation, to a very great extent, and while I should like to see the use of opium, whether crude or refined, totally destroyed and its importation and manufacture prevented, it is a grave question how far we should go with a class of people who have been carrying on a business, though not particularly in accord with our own views, in which very large sums of money have been invested, and destroy their trade and bring ruin upon those engaged in it. It seems to me there should be some provision in the Bill to enable them to dispose of the stocks they have, or give them compensation for the destruction of the property which they hold. It may be a popular view to take to abolish the traffic, but I have strong views in favour of the protection of those who are carrying on a business under the law as it exists upon the statute book, and if we desire to destroy the trade, let us take the manly course of compensating them for it, and destroy the article if you please. I will, in committee discuss the question as it has affected the country in the past, and what the policy of China, England, India and Hong Kong has been upon the subject. I think it is just as well to know exactly what position this question is in, in the eyes of the whole world.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—The province of British Columbia adopted laws and has endeavoured to suppress the traffic for some time, but it is carried on in defiance of the laws; however, after the Bill passed the House of Commons I received a number of

telegrams, and representatives of the parties called upon me, and I intended to submit this proposition when the Bill was in committee :—

Subject to any such regulations, it shall not be an offence under section 1 of this Act to sell or offer for sale or have in one's possession for sale, for export only, within three months after this Act comes into force.

Giving them three months in which to export.

Hon. Sir MACKENZIE BOWELL— To what country can it be exported ?

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—It must be taken out of Canada. I do not know where it would be exported to—China, I suppose.

Hon. Mr. LANDRY—Or put it on board the 'Arctic.'

Hon. Sir MACKENZIE BOWELL—Will the hon. gentleman try and secure the documents that I have asked for ?

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—I received a letter a few moments ago which is the only correspondence I have had. Mr. Mackenzie King made a report on it which has been printed and circulated, and beyond that I have had nothing except a telegram from British Columbia objecting to the Bill, and a communication from Mr. McInnes who represents the parties interested.

Hon. Sir MACKENZIE BOWELL—I understand that communications have been had with the premier and with the government in favour of the Bill which we are now considering, and that there have been protests from those who have large amounts of money invested in the business. Those are the ones I want.

Hon. Mr. SCOTT—I produced at council to-day a telegram from the gentleman acting for these parties, calling attention to the large amount of money invested, and asking that some consideration be given. However, I will make inquiries.

The motion was agreed to and the Bill was read the second time.

BILLS INTRODUCED.

Bill (204) 'An Act to amend chap. 38 of the Statutes, 1907, in amendment to the Railway Act.'—Hon. Mr. Scott.