

League of Nations

as the information must come from outside Ottawa it may still take a few days before the return is completed.

COPYRIGHT AMENDMENT ACT

On the orders of the day:

Mr. H. E. WILTON (Hamilton West): May I ask the Secretary of State (Mr. Rinfret) when he intends to proceed with Bill No. 55, to amend the Copyright Act, which received its second reading about three weeks ago? If permissible, I should also like while on my feet to call the attention of the Minister of Finance—

Mr. SPEAKER: Order.

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Prime Minister): May I answer my hon. friend by saying he will be advised in the usual way as to the order in which the different measures will be taken up. It is not possible to indicate at this stage what may be taken up possibly some days or even weeks hence.

SALES TAX ON AUTOMOBILES

On the orders of the day:

Mr. H. E. WILTON (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I should like to take this opportunity of calling the attention of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Dunning) to a telegram which I received yesterday from the automobile dealers of Hamilton. I believe a similar telegram was sent to the minister. They are complaining about the sales tax being imposed on automobiles which were purchased prior to the bringing down of the budget. In other words, they object to the tax being made retroactive, and they ask if something cannot be done to relieve them of what they regard as a burden.

Hon. CHARLES A. DUNNING (Minister of Finance): I have received several such telegrams.

SUPPLY—LEAGUE OF NATIONS

STATEMENT OF MR. WOODSWORTH ON MOTION OF MINISTER OF FINANCE

Hon. CHARLES A. DUNNING (Minister of Finance) moved that the house go into committee of supply.

Mr. J. S. WOODSWORTH (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, before you leave the chair I should like to refer once more to the question I put a few moments ago with reference to the situation at Geneva. Some days ago I asked the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) if he would afford an early opportunity for the house to discuss the

[Mr. Rinfret.]

present world situation and our attitude toward the League of Nations. He intimated that he was willing to do so, but apparently to-day he has altered his decision. He suggests that there will be an opportunity to discuss this matter when the estimates of the Department of External Affairs are being considered. In years past, however, these estimates as a rule have been presented very late in the session. I think I am correct in stating that for the last two years there has been no discussion on external affairs estimates.

Mr. BENNETT: We held them open to give you a chance.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: They were held open on one occasion, but last year there was a switch in the estimates late one evening, of which no notification was given beforehand, and some of us who were interested in discussing these matters had no opportunity of doing so. I do not say this by way of reflection on the previous government or even on the present government; I say it simply to emphasize the fact that on the whole the house has not taken any very great interest in external affairs.

Perhaps it may not be quite fair to precipitate a debate of this kind without giving hon. members an opportunity for preparation. The government certainly should be given an opportunity to make a careful canvass of its own position. I would not have introduced this matter to-day were it not for the fact that the Prime Minister apparently is determined to give the house no information whatever as to the foreign policy of the government at this very important crisis in world history.

I do not think it is necessary to review the events that have taken place within the last few weeks in Europe. Some people seem to think that Europe is so far away from us that we need not worry a great deal. As the Minister of Finance (Mr. Dunning) reminded us the other day, the last war is still with us and still offers one of the main budgetary factors to be considered. Only a few moments before I came down to the chamber I was interviewed by one of the victims of the last war, something which I have no doubt happens to many hon. members from time to time. All this is saddening. But surely it should mean consideration of policies for the future.

The world situation as it is to-day is too important a matter to be passed over so easily. I am not suggesting that the Prime Minister or the members of the government are indifferent to the matter; I am sure it must be