

Mr. CAMPBELL: Is it not a fact that the officers of the department reported that the American Furniture Company were selling furniture in Canada at the same prices charged in the United States? The minister refused to permit an order of the house to pass stating that the information asked for was confidential. I contend that it is a matter of urgent public importance that those papers should be brought before this house. If my information is correct, those papers in connection with the investigations into the prices of furniture sold by the American furniture companies were in the hands of the department at that time.

Mr. EULER: I think my hon. friend will admit that when that question was asked I stated that the report had not been received, but I said if it had been received that it would not be given to the house because it was the practice of the department not to disclose the business of any private individual. If that practice is to be reversed by the will of this house, I have nothing more to say. That is the practice which has always been followed, and I think it is a good one.

Resolution reported, read the second time, and concurred in. Mr. Dunning thereupon moved for leave to introduce Bill No. 347, for granting to His Majesty certain sums of money for the public service for the financial year ending March 31, 1931.

Motion agreed to, bill read the first and second times, considered in committee, reported, read the third time and passed.

MAPLE SUGAR INDUSTRY

CONCURRENCE IN SENATE AMENDMENTS

Hon. W. R. MOTHERWELL (Minister of Agriculture) moved the second reading of and concurrence in amendments made by the Senate to Bill No. 59, respecting the maple sugar industry.

Motion agreed to; amendments read the second time and concurred in.

PRIVILEGE—MR. BENNETT

Hon. R. B. BENNETT (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I rise to a question of privilege. It will be observed that one of the evening papers has displayed in large letters a declaration that a member of the house alleges that his frank has been forged. I thought the hon. member for Antigonish-Guysborough (Mr. Duff) was in his place, but I see I am mistaken. That hon. member made a charge of the most serious character involving his opening a letter which had been placed in his post office box. At

[Mr. Bennett.]

my request the envelope in which the letter was enclosed was handed to the clerk. After seeing this letter, the hon. member for Inverness (Mr. Macdougall) was certain that the initials were those of Mr. Finlay MacDonald, the hon. member for South Cape Breton. A few minutes later the hon. member for South Cape Breton entered the house and at once recognized his initials. He then communicated with Your Honour, as it was necessary that he leave immediately in order to catch a train, and stated that his initials "F. MacD" were those appearing on the envelope in question. I had not the slightest difficulty in recognizing the initials.

I desire, speaking only as one member of this house—this is not a question of privilege which attaches to me alone, but one which concerns every hon. member of this house—to place this matter before the house in order that the charge made against one of our members, namely that of forgery, should be met immediately before it can be sent out through the country. It was suggested that the initials of the hon. member for Antigonish-Guysborough had been forged, but there was no difficulty in recognizing them as being the initials of the hon. member for South Cape Breton. This is a question of privilege which does not belong to any individual member of the house; it is a question of privilege which concerns the whole house, and I raise it because it touches the honour of every hon. member. An hon. member asserts on the closing day of the session that he opened the letter under the circumstances. The envelope is placed on the table of the house before the clerk and remains there in order that an opportunity may be afforded for a statement to be made by Your Honour in consequence of the hon. member for South Cape Breton being called away to catch his train.

Mr. SPEAKER: After the incident this afternoon the clerk of the house sent the envelope to me, and I had the pleasure of a visit from Mr. MacDonald. He said in my presence that the initials were his; that it was his own frank, and I have no doubt, after what I have seen and knowing his handwriting, that they were his initials.

CRIMINAL CODE AMENDMENT

CONCURRENCE IN SENATE AMENDMENTS

Hon. ERNEST LAPOINTE (Minister of Justice) moved the second reading of and concurrence in amendments made by the Senate to Bill No. 138, to amend the criminal code.

Motion agreed to; amendments read the second time and concurred in.