

## STANDING COMMITTEES

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING  
(Prime Minister) moved :

That a special committee be appointed to prepare and report, with all convenient speed, lists of members to compose standing committees of this house under standing order 63, said committee to be composed of Messrs. Mackenzie, Chevrier, Casselman, Johnston and Weir.

Motion agreed to.

## INTERNAL ECONOMY COMMISSION

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING  
(Prime Minister) presented the following message from His Excellency the Governor General:

The Governor General transmits to the House of Commons a certified copy of an approved minute of council appointing the Honourable Ian Mackenzie, Minister of Veterans Affairs, the Right Honourable J. L. Ilsley, Minister of Finance, the Honourable J. A. MacKinnon, Minister of Trade and Commerce, and the Right Honourable L. S. St. Laurent, Minister of Justice, to act with the Speaker of the House of Commons as commissioners for the purposes and under the provisions of chapter 145 of the revised statutes of Canada, 1927, intitled: An Act respecting the House of Commons.

## OFFICIAL SECRETS ACT

DOCUMENTS RELATING TO PROCEEDINGS OF  
ROYAL COMMISSION

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING  
(Prime Minister): No doubt the house will wish to have as early as possible the documents relating to the proceedings of the royal commission established by order in council P.C. 411 of February 5, 1946. For the convenience of hon. members I have arranged to have these documents printed in advance of an order by the house, but I assume that the house will be agreeable to ordering copies once the documents have been tabled. The documents included in the booklet I have in my hand contain the statement which was made by myself on February 15, 1946, with reference to the appointment of the commission to investigate alleged violations of the Official Secrets Act; text of order in council P.C. 411 of February 5, 1946, establishing the royal commission; letter of the commission counsel to the Minister of Justice of February 23, 1946; text of order in council P.C. 6444 of October 6, 1945; and the first interim report of the royal commission to His Excellency the Governor General in council, of March 2, 1946.

Mr. COLDWELL: Does the Prime Minister intend to make a statement to the house on this situation within the next few days?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I had expected the house would be anxious to have a state-

ment at as early a date as possible. I shall be speaking on the address on Monday next and will avail myself of that occasion to make a statement to the house.

Mr. JOHN BRACKEN (Leader of the Opposition): I should like to take this opportunity of complimenting the Prime Minister on having arranged to let us have these documents. I believe he mentioned first the documents having to do with the loan to Britain. I was about to ask as a matter of fact that copies of the agreement be made available to us. I am satisfied with the provision which the Prime Minister has made. We are glad to have as well copies of the documents in connection with the espionage matter.

I had planned also to ask the Prime Minister a question with respect to that. Perhaps I might ask it now; he has partly answered it by intimating that he would have something to say about it when he comes to speak on Monday. My question is this, and I ask it because of a feeling of unrest and criticism which is abroad through lack of understanding of the procedure followed by the government in this case. My question was this—perhaps the Prime Minister will take it into account and deal with it when he comes to speak on Monday, if not before:

In view of the extraordinary procedure followed by the government in holding certain Canadians incommunicado in connection with this matter, will the Prime Minister or the Minister of Justice take an early occasion to clarify if possible their justification of this procedure?

Everyone in Canada will want to support the government in trying to stamp out espionage in this country, but some of us find it difficult to explain, let alone to justify, the extraordinary character of the procedure followed.

I would like the Prime Minister to take that into consideration. I trust he will see the wisdom of making a clear explanation because a great many thoughtful and honourable people in Canada find it difficult to understand why that particular type of procedure has been followed.

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING  
(Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the request which has just been made by the leader of the opposition (Mr. Bracken) is one which I anticipated he would make, and I share with him the feeling that it is desirable that the country should be given the fullest explanation of the reasons which have caused the commission to detain a certain number of persons before making their final report. I