

to have been committed. However, believing that the hon. member wished to obtain the fullest possible information on the point, not only for himself but for all those who are interested in the question of Sunday observance, I have endeavoured to procure it for him.

The hon. member knows that, notwithstanding the general provisions of the act, section 11 allows the performance on Sunday of any "work of necessity or mercy." In paragraphs (a) to (x) of section 11 various kinds of work are given as examples. Since the outbreak of the war the question has frequently arisen whether the urgent need of certain products was sufficient reason to continue their manufacture on Sundays. So long as the dominion government has not made any specific enactment in the matter, each case is one for the attorney general of the province to decide when, an apparent violation of the act having occurred, he is requested to authorize the taking of an action or a prosecution in the premises. Should he allow proceedings to be taken, the courts will decide the issue.

I am informed that in many instances manufacturers pressed by the Department of Munitions and Supply to increase their output have asked that department whether, in order to do so, they would be allowed to carry on their work on Sundays. Of course, the Department of Munitions and Supply could not give a certificate of immunity to anybody, but the officers of that department could express their opinion as to whether or not the work in question was sufficiently urgent to be classified as "work of necessity or mercy." I am told that in many instances officers of that department have written to manufacturers letters expressing an affirmative opinion and that the bearers of such letters communicated them to the attorney general of the province in which their plants were situated, who accepted the opinion of the Department of Munitions and Supply as sufficient reason for the exercise by him of the discretionary power to deny authorization to prosecute, conferred upon him by section 16 of the act.

I do not know whether or not the company operating the pulp and paper plant at Dolbeau has obtained from the Department of Munitions and Supply a statement of opinion as to the urgency of increasing the volume of its production, but I know in a general way that, wishing to accelerate as much as possible the output of pulp and paper, that department has informed several manufacturers that it considered the urgency sufficiently great to justify their requesting the attorney general

of their province not to authorize proceedings against them in respect of work done on Sundays for the purpose of increasing available stocks of their product.

Mr. LIGUORI LACOMBE (Laval-Two Mountains): May I ask the Minister of Justice whether he will draw the attention of the attorney general of the province of Quebec to the non-essential work performed by the Lake St. John Pulp and Paper Company Limited?

Mr. ST. LAURENT: Mr. Speaker, I do not think it is the duty of the Minister of Justice to take the action requested by the hon. member. Any citizen of a province may draw the attorney general's attention to anything occurring in his province.

(Text) Mr. HOMUTH: In view of the fact that the answer given by the Minister of Justice has a bearing on all industry in Canada, would he give the house a summary in English of the answer he has given, so that all hon. members may be familiar with it?

Mr. St. LAURENT: Perhaps it will suffice if I tell the hon. member that the translation will be printed in the English Debates.

Mr. HOMUTH: Could we not have a synopsis of it?

Mr. St. LAURENT: I can send my hon. friend now a rough translation if he wishes to have it.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): That is all right.

WAR EXPENDITURES

INQUIRY AS TO APPOINTMENT OF SPECIAL COMMITTEE

On the orders of the day:

Mr. M. J. COLDWELL (Rosetown-Biggart): May I ask the Prime Minister if at this session a special committee will be set up to look into war expenditures? A number of hon. members are anxious that such a committee be formed.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Yes, it is the intention to have a committee on war expenditures.

Mr. HOMUTH: Will the committee to be set up act as a secret committee, as the last one did, or is it to be one which will function openly so that the people will know what is going on?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order. The hon. member's question might well be put on the order paper.