

last Thursday by a public holiday, leaving no day on which public orders would have precedence. There are many Bills important to and in the interest of the people thus held back. Could the minister set aside a day on which public Bills would have precedence?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I would have to look into the matter. Of course if that were the general wish of the House, it would be my duty to comply with that wish.

#### INQUIRIES FOR RETURNS.

Mr. WILSON (Lennox). I would call the attention of the Minister of Public Works to the fact that a good many of the letters in a return which was brought down at my request relating to dredging in the Napanee river, are transmitted by Mr. Warburton. I do not see how Mr. Warburton could transmit these letters to the department without writing, and I would like to have his letters produced.

Mr. PUGSLEY. I will look into it.

Mr. ARMSTRONG. I desire to ask when I may expect a return ordered by this House on December 15, 1909, with reference to a government weir at the port of Montreal?

#### RECIPROCITY NEGOTIATIONS AT WASHINGTON.

Mr. PERLEY. There is a report in the press that a draft of the proposed trade reciprocity treaty that is being negotiated at Washington between representatives of the Canadian and United States governments, has been forwarded to Ottawa for consideration. Will the Prime Minister say if that report is correct?

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. That report is premature.

#### SUPPLY—CLOTHING OF DISCHARGED CONVICTS.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER moved that the House go into Committee of Supply.

Mr. EDWARDS. Before this motion is put I desire again to call the attention of the government to a matter referred to by the Minister of Justice yesterday, when I did not happen to be present. The Kingston 'Standard' stated some day last week that more than one prisoner had been released from the Kingston penitentiary without sufficient clothing for this season of the year. With regard to the particular case referred to as having been deported to the United States, I happened to be on the same train with the officer who was taking that ex-convict to Ogdensburg for deportation; and he assured me that the ex-convict

was not provided with any overcoat. I want to draw the attention of the Minister of Justice to a statement which he made, referring to this matter yesterday. He said, in laying the facts before the House in regard to this particular case, that he thought the substance of it ought to be made public in justice to the warden. Now one would naturally infer from that language that any prisoner leaving the penitentiary without an overcoat, or leaving in the condition described the other day, was an isolated case, that in fact the warden would have instructions to provide the prisoners with clothing sufficient for this time of the year; and I take it for granted that in order to have sufficient clothing for this time of the year every man going out now should have an overcoat. I notice that all the members of parliament coming into this House think it necessary to have an overcoat, consequently it seems to be considered a necessary part of clothing at this time. But the particular case I referred to of the prisoner being deported was not an isolated one. A few days later an ex-convict whose home was in the province of Ontario left that institution without any overcoat, and with the thermometer on that day registering ten or twelve degrees below zero. Now I desire to place on the 'Hansard' a letter I received this morning from a gentleman who is in a position to speak with regard to this matter. The letter is dated Montreal, January 19, and is addressed to myself:

I desire to thank you personally for drawing attention in parliament to the need of more clothing for discharged prisoners from the Dominion penitentiaries in mid-winter. I have been working with released prisoners from the various jails and penitentiaries for sixteen years, and it has been the rule to discharge men in mid-winter without an overcoat during the whole of that time, from the Dominion penitentiaries. The Prisoners' Aid Association of Montreal have written on various occasions to the Minister of Justice, mostly I think when the Hon. Chas. Fitzpatrick was minister, but were generally put off with some excuse from a minor official. Perhaps some time, if needed, I could give you more particulars, but I can state positively that I myself, on different occasions, have purchased twenty or thirty overcoats for men discharged from St. Vincent de Paul penitentiary in winter.

Yours sincerely,

JAMES ELLIOTT,

Sec'y, Montreal Prisoners' Aid Assn.

Now I say this letter, in addition to the facts which have come to the notice of people living in the city of Kingston, very near the penitentiary, should be sufficient to cause this government to take action, and to prevent this sort of thing from occurring in the future. I am informed that the guards at the Kingston penitentiary are during this bitter weather pacing up and