

States Government, it would be proper for the First Minister to draw the attention of the authorities at Washington to what I think was a very undue interference with our political rights.

The PRIME MINISTER. With reference to the question asked me a moment ago by the hon. member for Victoria (Mr. Hughes), I may repeat what I had occasion to say. I believe in his absence, that I thought it advisable to ask the House not to press this Bill any further to-night in order that the Government may satisfy itself as to the nature of the correspondence which intervened between the late Government and the American authorities, and to see whether any hope can still be entertained of coming to a satisfactory settlement of this question with the American authorities. If, by the correspondence which has taken place, we have to come to the very painful conclusion that nothing more is to be expected from the American authorities, but that they will persist in maintaining upon their statute-book a very unfriendly law, then in my estimation there will be nothing left for Parliament to do but to adopt the measure proposed by the hon. member for Leeds.

Mr. HUGHES. This session ?

The PRIME MINISTER. Certainly. But if, on the other hand, there is reason to believe that further negotiations would operate to induce the American authorities to retrace their action and take a more friendly attitude, then, of course, when the question comes up again, I would ask the hon. gentleman to defer it until the next session. Now, I come to the suggestion which has been made by the hon. member for Leeds, and supported by some hon. gentlemen on the other side, as to the appointment of a committee to investigate this question. Well, I must say to my hon. friend that I do not see that there is any necessity for such a committee.

Mr. TAYLOR. I meant a committee to prepare or amend the present Bill.

The PRIME MINISTER. The object of the committee might be, first, to investigate the facts, as was suggested by the hon. member for Simcoe (Mr. Bennett); but there are no facts to be investigated, so far as I am aware, which are not sufficiently well known to enable us to take any action. The only question is whether the American law is to be maintained or not. If the American law is to be maintained, I feel that we should have this measure. The hon. gentleman says a committee should be appointed to inquire into the matter and settle the provisions of the Bill. I differ with the hon. gentleman on that point. I am very strongly of the opinion,—and I place myself in the judgment of the House—that if we are to adopt this measure, which will be a retaliatory measure, its terms should be word for word with those of the

American law. That is the best way to deal with the matter, for the Americans cannot complain if we apply to them an identical measure of justice or injustice. Therefore, there is no use in having a committee to settle the terms of the Bill. The hon. member for Winnipeg (Mr. Macdonald) said that retaliation had no terrors for him. I do not agree with that sentiment. I think retaliation is always a measure to be deprecated; but there are occasions when retaliation, which we all must deprecate, becomes a necessity for a nation which has a sense of its own dignity, and I believe such an occasion will arise if the American authorities persist in keeping on the statute-book this law, which is certainly a most unfriendly law.

Mr. HUGHES. It is not my intention to speak at any length, but I think a misapprehension prevails among hon. members sitting on this side of the House as to the intention of the First Minister. I understand his intention is to inquire into the subject during the next few days, and if satisfactory evidence cannot be adduced that the American government are friendly, to allow the Bill to proceed this session. Any number of arguments could be adduced in support of passing the present Bill, if the Americans do not repeal their law. Negotiations might possibly result in this, that after a settlement has been arrived at between the Washington authorities and the Dominion Government in regard to such a law, difficulties might arise under some State law, as was the case with the canal regulations. I suggest that in any negotiations carried on, the First Minister should inquire into this matter and see that it is placed on a proper basis.

Sir CHARLES TUPPER. I do not think any misapprehension exists on this side of the House. I am inclined to think the hon. member for North Victoria (Mr. Hughes) was not present during the whole of the debate. The understanding was a very clear one, and the proposal of the First Minister was this: That the Bill should not proceed any further, but remain over till next session, and thus give the Government an opportunity during recess of opening those friendly and diplomatic relations with the United States that we all hope will avoid the necessity of proceeding with this matter. The suggestion of the hon. member for Simcoe (Mr. Tisdale), that a special committee be appointed for the purpose of acquiring information and investigating the subject, would fail in its object, because we all anticipate a very short session, and the moment the session was concluded the functions of the Committee would be at an end, and so nothing would be obtained in that way. We are all of the opinion that the best mode of dealing with the question is that suggested by the First Minister—to exhaust every possible means of diplo-