

reading, that we do not affirm that principle. He has stated that his desire is that the Bill should be referred to a Select Committee, in order that there should be a careful and full report made of the conditions and circumstances of our grievance and difficulty with the neighboring Republic—not the grievance and difficulty which this Bill professedly is designed to remove, namely, that too many people are coming in from the other side, but the grievance and difficulty we labor under by the restriction of the passage from our side to the other of the citizens of our own country. I hold that is not the function of a Select Committee on the Bill. I think, Sir, you will find that all the Select Committee on the Bill can do, if you strike one, is to report the Bill either in its present shape, or with such amendments as they may think should be submitted to the House; and, therefore, the object the right hon. gentleman has in view will not be attained by the appointment of the Select Committee he proposes. If the purpose be to examine this question carefully, to consider its whole bearings—the bearings, namely, of the operation of the law of the United States upon us, and the bearings of the operation of such a law as is proposed by this Bill upon us, and the best remedies for the difficulties—the better plan would be, that the hon. mover of the Bill should propose, or that the hon. First Minister should propose, a motion for the appointment of a Select Committee to consider the whole subject and report upon it. Such a Committee could consider it and give us a full and general report, which a Select Committee on the Bill will not, under its appointment, have power to give, as such Committee will be able to deal only with this Bill, which presents but one side of the case, and its powers will be limited to simply remodelling the clauses according as the Committee think they should be remodelled. I wish to refer briefly to another matter, in respect of which I have been anticipated by my hon. friend the member for South Oxford (Sir Richard Cartwright). I do

think that the passage, in its present form, of the legislation on the other side, and the effect which has been suffered to be given to that legislation, without any attempt made to modify it, are very cogent proofs of the importance of a diplomatic agent of Canada being present at Washington. I stated that view as long ago as the year 1880, and I think all that has happened since that time has indicated the importance of our doing what I then said we ought to do, that is, to send there the very best man this country can afford, to bend his mind to the consideration of those matters in which the interests of the one country are affected by the action of the other, in which Canadian interests are affected by what is being done and what is being said in Washington. I thought then, and I think now, that it is important that there should be always a free and responsible Canadian medium for the interchange of opinion with the Washington authorities in regard to Canadian interests. I believe that, if that plan were adopted in regard to a country which, to adopt the language of the hon. member for Northumberland (Mr. Mitchell), is so much governed by newspapers, misunderstandings would not occur, difficulties would be explained, the path would be made easier in many ways in regard to our various relations with the States. This House is now sitting, and it may perhaps have a function to discharge in regard to this matter. My opinion is that the function would be best discharged by the appointment of a Select Committee; but, if you are going to accept the suggestion of the First Minister in regard to this Bill, it will either be necessary to interfere with the precedents and practice of Select Committees on Bills, or, in some extraordinary way, by giving some special authority or instruction to the Committee, to enable them to make a finding in this regard, otherwise you will find, when the report comes back, that it will not be what you expect.