

necessity of getting the consent of the board. A vote was taken in the committee and my amendment was carried. The Senate has now put the matter in the same form as it was before. All that I am desirous of ensuring by my amendment is that there should not be unnecessary duplication of lines, and, therefore, no unnecessary money expended in that manner. I would suggest that the amendment be not accepted by the committee.

Mr. J. E. ARMSTRONG: This matter was thoroughly discussed in the Railway Committee, and while it is true that the committee carried the amendment moved by the hon. member (Mr. Middlebro) on a vote of 21 to 20, it is also true that it was carried at a hurried stage of the proceedings of the committee, and it would be well for this Committee to take into consideration these words. In the first place, this proviso was carefully prepared by Mr. Ruel, representative of the Canadian National railways along with the representative of the Canadian Pacific railway, and they were both convinced that the word "may" should remain. I understand that the question has been submitted to Sir Henry Drayton, and that he believes it is perfectly right that the word "may" as proposed by the Senate should remain in the Bill instead of the word "shall."

Senate amendment concurred in.

SECOND READINGS.

Bill No. 126, (from the Senate), respecting The Canadian Pacific Railway Company.—Mr. Redman.

Bill No. 127, (from the Senate), respecting the Grand Trunk Railway Company.—Mr. Euler.

Bill No. 128, (from the Senate), respecting The Ottawa, Northern and Western Railway Company.—Mr. Devlin.

Bill No. 129, (from the Senate), for the relief of Stanley Gordon Eversfield.—Mr. Douglas (Strathcona).

PURCHASING OF DEPARTMENTAL AND OTHER SUPPLIES.

The House resumed the debate on the motion of Hon. Mr. Rowell for the second reading of Bill No. 46, respecting the purchasing of departmental and other supplies and materials for His Majesty.

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: I had so nearly finished what I purposed saying that it seems hardly worth while to resume, but perhaps it would be desirable to present

to the House the considerations set forth in the report of the War Purchasing Commission, to which report I have already alluded. The disadvantages of the methods which have prevailed in the past were presented to us in this way:

The need for centralization is clearly demonstrated by the numerous disadvantages of the present arrangements under which each department makes its own purchases, subject to approval of the War Purchasing Commission. Some of these disadvantages may be stated as follows:

(a) Each department is now buying supplies in utter ignorance of what the others are doing.

(b) The departments generally do not get the benefit of the technical knowledge and experience acquired in each department.

(c) The quantity of goods required by some of the departments is not sufficient to enable them to purchase at the best prices.

(d) When high prices prevail, owing to shortage of material, this condition is aggravated by competition amongst the Government departments themselves.

(e) There is a lack of uniformity of specifications and also of inspection.

(f) Large volume of emergency orders resulting in higher costs and giving opportunity for irregularities and complaints arising therefrom.

(g) There is a deplorable lack in the departments of study of market conditions, revisions of specifications, et cetera.

The report continues:

That co-ordination in Government buying would do much to remove or lessen the disadvantages of the present methods is beyond question. Enquiry shows that while each department may require certain supplies which are peculiar to its special needs, yet the larger proportion of the total outlay is for goods common to several departments. If the requirements in a particular line, instead of being ordered separately by each department, were bought collectively by a central purchasing office with its staff of experts for each class of goods, the larger quantities ordered, the elimination of competition among the departments, the decrease in emergency purchases, the adoption of uniform specifications and methods of inspection, and the many other improvements which would be possible would result in an enormous saving of money, and still further remove any temptations to personal favouritism which may now exist or tend to creep in in the future.

Some reference was made this afternoon to the possibility of delay through waiting for the action of a Central Purchasing Commission in respect of small supplies required by departments of the Government in different parts of the country. That subject has been under consideration. It was dealt with by a provision in the Order in Council, and as to emergency purchases of that character—small purchases urgently required and as to which it would be quite undesirable to go to the expense of advertising for tenders—there is no reason why these