

placed in such service as the Government might desire to place him in in the national interest; that his compensation should be fixed by officials of the Government, and that in fixing that compensation due regard should be had to the compensation which the man would receive if he had responded to the call of his country and gone to the front instead of remaining here engaging in other work.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I am pretty well in agreement with the hon. member for St. John (Mr. Pugsley) as to the wisdom in general of having all the tribunals open to the public. As these tribunals are in the nature of law courts, they should be, as law courts in general, open to the public. Of course, every one knows at the hearing of any case it is within the power of the judge to clear the court room and make it a non-public sitting.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER: For very substantial reasons.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Yes. Consequently my present impression is that it would be better to leave the Bill as it is, because the determination as to public sittings of the tribunals is a matter of procedure and of the constitution and practice of the court. Consequently it comes within the clause as to regulations which are to be framed by the Supreme Court judge, known as the central appeal judge. I think that the central appeal judge would be better able to frame regulations as to public or non-public hearings in particular cases than this committee. There might be cases where it would be a gross injustice to an individual that the hearing should be in public; but in the main the hearings should certainly be public, and the principles that would apply should be practically the same as apply in courts of law.

The second amendment proposed is of a most radical and extraordinary character. If adopted in principle, much more if adopted in detail, it would mean a very radical and extraordinary change indeed in the whole commercial and industrial system of the country. I should be glad if the hon. member would supply me with a copy of the amendment at six o'clock.

At six o'clock the committee took recess.

After Recess.

The committee resumed at eight o'clock, Mr. Bain in the Chair.

On section 11, Exemptions.

Mr. PROULX: Has the Solicitor General accepted the amendment proposed by the hon. member from Chambly and Verchères (Mr. Rainville), that the local tribunals shall have power to exempt men of the agricultural class?

Mr. MEIGHEN: I have made a note of the suggestion made by the hon. gentleman from Chambly and Verchères. I cannot see, for the moment, that it will change the legal effect of the Bill in any degree. The only reason why it might be reserved is that perhaps the amendment would make the object more clear.

Mr. NESBITT: I think the amendment proposed by my hon. friend from Chambly and Verchères would, perhaps, make it plainer, and, as it is included in the preamble, would certainly not do any harm, and would make clear the intention of the section. Therefore, I endorse his suggestion. I would not like to say that I agree with my hon. friend from North Perth (Mr. Morphy), in his suggestion, because I think it is unnecessary. I think the Solicitor General, following the suggestion of my hon. friend from St. John (Mr. Pugsley), could very well take the opportunity, either in this Bill or in a concurrent Bill, to organize labour. Since the war started, we have wanted nothing greater than the organization of labour. We require that just as badly as we require an increase of taxation, which would exempt nobody, and would furnish more towards the expenses of the war as we go along. I hope the Minister of Finance is preparing a Bill, which he will introduce by the time this Bill is passed, which will impose a general and heavier taxation on the people, so that the people may pay a greater proportion of the expenses of the war, and so that less may be borrowed. There certainly will be a limit to our borrowing capacity before long, and it is not fair to the country that we should postpone until after the war, making provision for the enormous expenses of this war. The country is more or less prosperous at the present time, and can well afford to pay more taxes. I do not refer to any special class, but I think that the people should in future pay more towards this war than they have in the past. With reference to the suggestion of the hon. gentleman from St. John, that the wages of the men throughout the country should be set on the same basis as the present pay to the soldiers, I am sorry to say I cannot agree with him.