

there was a resolution with regard to the economic council of Canada; as it refers more particularly to the Prime Minister's department possibly it might be supposed to be introduced by the Prime Minister, but in the circumstances I think it might quite properly have been in the name of the Secretary of State. Then we have had several labour measures. We have one on the order paper still, placed there on March 6, in respect to the creation of minimum wage fixing machinery. This is in the name of the Prime Minister, I think it should have been in the name of the Minister of Labour. We have had a weekly day of rest bill, we have had an eight hour day bill and other measures relating distinctly to labour, which in the circumstances would more properly have been in the name of the minister of the department concerned. Then on March 8 there was introduced a bill respecting the additional protocol of 1935 to the Canada-France trade agreement. That surely was a matter for the Minister of Trade and Commerce, or, seeing that the Secretary of State had to do with the negotiation of part of it, it might have been in his name, but I think should have appeared in the name of the Minister of Trade and Commerce. Now we have this particular measure which is certainly public works and railways; why it should be in the name of the Prime Minister, and the Minister of Public Works should take charge of it, I cannot understand.

I sometimes fear that we are completely changing the character of our political institutions, and amongst other things that little by little in this parliament we are following what I think is a mistaken method becoming common in Europe, of having the leader of a political party assume responsibility for all measures, and other ministers reduced to mere ciphers, in the part which they are to take in the proceedings of parliament and in discussion of public questions. I bring the matter up now because I think it is time that attention should be called to what is certainly an irregular procedure. I know the acting Prime Minister is here, and it is quite right that any measure that pertains to the Prime Minister's office should be introduced by him and dealt with by him, but when it comes to a position such as we have this afternoon, where a measure is in the name of the Prime Minister and the acting Prime Minister leaves it to other colleagues to deal with, I submit it is obvious that there is something not wholly in accord with the theory of collective responsibility on the part of the ministry and the direct responsibility of certain ministers.

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

Right Hon. Sir GEORGE PERLEY (Acting Prime Minister): I need hardly say that I think the right hon. gentleman's remarks are not in order just now. However, I did not care to interrupt him. But I do not think he need be at all worried about the fact of some of these bills having been in the name of the Prime Minister. In the first place the greater number of those he mentioned were brought in in the name of the Prime Minister when it was expected that he would be back in the house almost any day to attend to them. I want to tell the right hon. gentleman further that all these measures have been submitted to the Prime Minister and he is cognizant of them. As far as I am concerned I happen to be a minister without portfolio—the pay of the ordinary minister was not big enough for me, so I am acting without portfolio. Now I have never known a case of a bill being brought into this house in the name of a minister without portfolio. The right hon. gentleman may happen to know of one but I do not. As far as this particular bill is concerned it refers to various departments, but is all for the purpose of creating employment and so on. It is largely to supplement the Public Works Construction Act of last year, and that will so appear in the bill. The Minister of Public Works is going to take this bill and attend to it, but the various ministers and departments involved will be prepared to discuss their own part of the schedules and answer questions about them when we come to the schedules. I submit that this is a bill which covers the activities of various departments, and it having been submitted to the Prime Minister and having received his consent I think it was quite properly put in his name.

Mr. A. A. HEAPS (North Winnipeg): I wonder if the acting Prime Minister would be good enough to answer a question at this stage? Has he received any requests from the two railways for the manufacture of this equipment?

Mr. SPEAKER: This is not the time for questions.

Sir GEORGE PERLEY: This motion is not debatable. When the resolution is brought up the hon. gentleman's question can be asked.

Mr. J. S. WOODSWORTH (Winnipeg North Centre): I should like to endorse what has been said by the right hon. leader of the opposition (Mr. Mackenzie King). It does not seem to me that it is a proper form that a general resolution of this kind, involving at