

Mr. BURRELL: My department has practically nothing to do with that. I understand that Mr. O'Connor was appointed by the Minister of Labour to make an inquiry into the cost of living, including cold storage. Perhaps the Prime Minister will answer my hon. friend's other question.

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: The Minister of Labour could give more information than I can, because it comes more directly under his department. An order in council was passed appointing Mr. O'Connor a commissioner for the purpose of obtaining certain information. The inquiring consisted in obtaining certain returns, upon which he based his conclusions.

Mr. MACDONALD: I saw in the papers that another order in council had been passed appointing certain gentlemen—I assume under the Inquiries Act—for the purpose of inquiring into the truth of the report made by Mr. O'Connor. I think the right hon. gentleman should make a statement with regard to the matter. It seems to me that the reasonable and proper thing to do, after receiving a report by a properly authorized official of this Government, would be to refer the matter to a committee of the House of Commons.

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: These gentlemen were appointed under the Inquiries Act and under the order in council to which allusion has been made. The question was largely one of accounts, profits and so forth. The inquiry, in my judgment, was eminently one for gentlemen of the experience possessed by those who were appointed. It does not seem to me that a committee of the House of Commons, with all deference to their qualifications, would be the best tribunal for an inquiry which has to take into consideration complicated accounts, and deal with matters of a more or less complex nature in relation to very large business affairs. For that reason we thought it better to make other provision for an inquiry of such a nature.

Mr. MACDONALD: I assume the Prime Minister does not intend the constitution of this new tribunal to be any reflection upon Mr. O'Connor or his inquiry?

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: Mr. O'Connor himself, in his report, recommended a further inquiry.

Mr. NESBITT: Who constitute the commission?

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: Mr. Geo. F. Henderson, K.C., residing in the city of Ot-

tawa, who has had a good deal of experience as a drainage referee in Ontario; Mr. A. B. Brodie, of the firm of Price, Waterhouse & Company, Montreal, and Mr. Geoffrey Clarkson, member of the firm of Clarkson, Gordon and Dilworth. I am informed that both of these gentlemen are very expert chartered accountants, and that they are as good men for the purpose as could be found anywhere in Canada.

Mr. CARVELL: The newspaper, the morning or this evening, announced that a gentleman from Chicago had been sent here by Mr. Hoover, the food controller of the United States, to act upon this commission and that his name was Connor, or O'Connor. Is there any truth in that?

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: The board consists of the three gentlemen I have named. The food controller, Mr. Hanna, has stated that Mr. Hoover, the food controller in the United States, has offered to place at the disposal of this board, in an advisory capacity, if it is desired, a gentleman experienced in questions of this character who is attached to the staff of the food controller in the United States.

Mr. CARVELL: Are these gentlemen working without remuneration, as stated in the newspaper?

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: These gentlemen are.

Mr. NESBITT: Are these two accountants working without remuneration?

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: Yes.

Mr. NESBITT: They are very capable men so far as I know, but I do not know what in the world Mr. Henderson knows about investigating accounts.

Mr. MACDONALD: I see that in the United States legislation has passed Congress by which industries which produce articles that enter into the common life of every one, and which are also essential to the successful prosecution of the war, must be licensed by the Government. In view of the serious problems that arose during the past winter in regard to the consumption of food and other articles that enter into the life of the home, it would seem that the best method of dealing with the conditions that have arisen, and which have been disclosed by the report of Mr. O'Connor, would be to take hold of these enterprises, license them, and thereby control them in such a way that the difficulties complained of by Mr. O'Connor could not arise. I gather