

how humble his position, may have an ample opportunity of considering and studying it. That is a reasonable attitude to take, and as we are at the beginning of what you might call our international history as a nation, we should be careful to see that we start aright. The Minister of Justice (Mr. Doherty) has told us that this Treaty of Peace with Austria is on all lines similar to the Treaty of Peace with Germany. We accept his word; but, after all, Germany and Austria are two very different countries. There are many of us who feel that certain of the nations that went to make up the Austrian Empire were not and are not animated with feelings of hostility to Great Britain. Penal clauses which may or may not have their place, but which may have their place in a Treaty of Peace with Germany, may be quite out of keeping in a Treaty of Peace with Austria. For instance, the other day I read in a paper—I do not know whether it was a British paper or not—that the British ambassador at Vienna had been the subject of a most sympathetic and enthusiastic reception when he went to the opera house in that city the other day. I do not know whether such a thing would be possible in Berlin, but I presume it would not be. With all due respect to the Minister of Justice, I do not think it is the right thing for him to ask this House to consent—for that is what this amounts to—making this treaty with Austria. If our approval or ratification be desirable—and in my humble judgment I believe it to be desirable—then it should be asked for only after a perfectly adequate opportunity is given to the members of this House to consider the treaty.

Mr. D. D. McKENZIE: As a general principle, I concur entirely in what has been stated by the hon. member for Brome (Mr. McMaster), that is, if the consideration of this House be at all necessary or recognized, that before we are asked to take any action upon an international document or agreement, this House should have an opportunity of seeing it. I am sure the minister will not, for a moment, say that that is not a sound principle. I do not see how we can justify any other course than to stand by the principle that, before we ratify or concur in so important a document as a Treaty of Peace between ourselves and the Empire of which we form a part and one of the enemy powers with which we have been fighting for the last five years, that document should be laid upon the table of the House, a copy of it put into the hands of every member who has to pass judgment

upon it, and after he has had an opportunity of doing so, that he should give an opinion regarding it. That is the only sound principle upon which we can act. The Minister of Justice asks us to forego all that and to take his word for the contents of this document, which he says has been signed and which no doubt has been signed. That is good enough in its way, and no person in this House will, for a moment, contend that the Minister of Justice is concealing anything that is in the document. Nevertheless, that does not mend the situation. If a member of the House, or even a minister of the Crown wants to move the first reading of a Bill, the practice of this House will not permit him to do so until a copy of that Bill is handed to the Speaker. If that be regarded as a good and sound rule in the House of Commons as regards a Bill which, as the very next step, must necessarily be printed and put into the hands of every member, I think it would be regarded as more so in respect to so important a document as a treaty. For that reason, speaking for myself, and for hon. members on this side of the House who may not express their own views, I think we must express ourselves as opposed to the principle involved in the whole of the amendment made by the Senate and also as disapproving the parts of it which the Minister of Justice announces as having been accepted by the Government. It is perfectly constitutional for the Government of Canada to advise His Majesty to approve of this Treaty, without its being submitted to Parliament at all. That principle was laid down in this House when we were discussing the Treaty some weeks ago, and it was laid down from our general knowledge of the constitution of the British Empire. Our friends opposite did not think it proper to accept that doctrine, and insisted that the Treaty should be laid on the Table, and that every hon. member should have an opportunity of reading it and passing judgment upon it. That was a sound democratic idea, and we are not finding fault with it at all. It was a good beginning in a new direction, the turning over of a new leaf in the constitution of the British Empire. At the same time, it was not necessary upon sound principles of constitutional law, because the King upon the advice of his ministers, and as far as the colonies are concerned, upon the advice of his colonial ministers, would have been absolutely within the constitution in giving his assent to the Treaty without consulting any one else. If the King chooses, however, to extend to us the courtesy asking