

Mr. MAHARG: As the hon. member who is leading the House seems to be somewhat reluctant to express his opinion as to the date of the calling of the next session, may I ask whether it is the intention of the Government to comply as far as possible with the opinion almost unanimously expressed by hon. members in a petition asking that the Government summon the next session as early in the year as possible?

Mr. DOHERTY: No such petition has yet reached us; at least, none has come to my knowledge. The Government desires to meet as far as possible the unanimous wish of members of the House or the wish of any number of hon. members. But I think hon. members must realize the impossibility of our announcing to-day the date of the calling of the next session.

SPECIAL IMPERIAL CONFERENCE.

On the Orders of the Day:

Mr. E. LAPOINTE (Quebec East): May I ask whether the Government has heard of any step being taken for the summoning of the special Imperial Conference which is to consider the constitutional relations of the Empire?

Mr. DOHERTY: I am not aware that any special step has been taken to summon that conference.

Mr. E. LAPOINTE: Would it not be advisable for the Government to suggest to the British authorities a postponement of the summoning of that conference until there is in charge of the affairs of this country a Government which is in harmony with public opinion?

Mr. SPEAKER: Order. The hon. member is taking advantage of his privilege on the Orders of the Day. If there is one rule which is well established it is that the action of the Government is in no case to be called in question.

Mr. E. LAPOINTE: It is merely a suggestion.

Mr. DOHERTY: The hon. member has furnished a most conclusive reason for the greatest possible haste in summoning that conference.

ADMIRAL JELlicoe AND THE GOVERNMENT'S NAVAL POLICY.

On the Orders of the Day:

Mr. E. LAPOINTE: The newspapers this morning say that Admiral Jellicoe has reached the shores of Canada and that he

had been invited to Ottawa to confer with the Government about their naval policy. May I inquire whether a naval policy has already been settled upon by the Government and if it is proposed to submit that policy to the admiral for his approval, or whether the admiral will come here to suggest a policy? I think we are entitled to some information as to what is proposed to be done.

Mr. DOHERTY: Any policy that is to be adopted will be settled upon by the Government of this country, and for approval the Government will look to the Parliament of Canada. The advice of an officer of such great distinction as Admiral Jellicoe would undoubtedly be valued and most welcome to this Government, but the settling of policies rests with the Government of Canada and the approval of policies rests with the Parliament of Canada.

Mr. E. LAPOINTE: Do I understand, then, that no naval policy has actually been adopted by the Government?

Mr. DOHERTY: Just as soon as the Government shall have adopted a policy it will be pleased to communicate that policy to Parliament and to the people of Canada.

THE PRIME MINISTER'S HEALTH.

On the Orders of the Day:

Mr. W. L. MACKENZIE KING: I should like to say to the acting leader of the Government—there may not be another opportunity of doing so—that hon. members on this side, with, I am sure, hon. gentlemen opposite, regret the absence of the Prime Minister during the greater part of this session on account of illness. Can the hon. gentleman give us any information as to the state of the Prime Minister's health and his progress toward recovery? I am sure that we would all like to have some information with regard to that before the House prorogues.

Mr. DOHERTY: We are glad to be able to say that our information is that the Right Hon. Prime Minister is gaining in strength and that we may hope for his perfect recovery. Exactly when we may hope to have him back I am not in a position to say at the present moment.

SOLDIERS' CIVIL RE-ESTABLISHMENT.

On the Orders of the Day:

Mr. J. F. Fafard (L'Islet): Considering the request made by our returned soldiers that a gratuity be granted them towards their civil re-