

Mr. KING (Kootenay): We have been advised by the Justice department that the present act should be amended and consolidated.

Motion agreed to and bill read the first time.

ROOT VEGETABLES ACT AMENDMENT

Hon. W. R. MOTHERWELL (Minister of Agriculture) moved for leave to introduce Bill No. 5, to amend the Root Vegetables Act.

Mr. GUTHRIE: Explain.

Mr. MOTHERWELL: This bill provides for the establishment of certain grades for vegetables and prescribes the size of containers and the handling of vegetables for export.

Motion agreed to and bill read the first time.

RAILWAY ACT AMENDMENT

INVESTIGATION OF SUBSIDIARY OF TELEPHONE OR TELEGRAPH COMPANIES

Mr. G. R. GEARY (South Toronto) moved for leave to introduce Bill No. 6, to amend the Railway Act (investigation of subsidiary of telephone or telegraph companies).

Mr. DUNNING: Explain.

Mr. GEARY: Mr. Speaker, this is a bill very much along the lines of the bill introduced by myself last session, providing that the Railway Act be so amended as to give the railway board jurisdiction on a rate inquiry to investigate not only the affairs of a company under its present jurisdiction, but also the affairs of a subsidiary of such company.

Motion agreed to and bill read the first time.

INTERNATIONAL PEACE

MULTILATERAL TREATY FOR THE RENUNCIATION OF WAR

On the orders of the day:

Mr. H. B. ADSHEAD (East Calgary): Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that we have just received the general treaty for the renunciation of war, signed at Paris on August 27, 1928, I should like to ask the Prime Minister whether the government has notified the British government that Canada will sign the optional clause.

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Prime Minister): I might say to my hon. friend that something has been done. I shall be glad to inform him what it is later on.

GOVERNOR GENERAL'S SPEECH

DEBATE ON MOTION FOR ADDRESS IN REPLY

The house resumed from Friday, February 8, consideration of the motion of Mr. T. M. Cayley for an address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his speech at the opening of the session.

Hon. R. B. BENNETT (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, those of us who sit to your left join with the members of the government in congratulating the hon. gentlemen who moved and seconded the address in reply to the speech from the throne. They discharged that time honoured duty with satisfaction to their party and credit to themselves.

The reference in the address to the improved condition in the health of the sovereign has already been considered by this house in a formal way, and I am sure we all trust the day is not far distant when the entire British Empire may unite in general thanksgiving to Almighty God for having preserved to the peoples of the empire the life of their beloved sovereign.

The speech from the throne, apart from that, may indeed without exaggeration be said to be a document of glittering generalities; it is somewhat difficult to ascertain by a careful perusal of it just what definite legislative proposals the government may have in mind. It is rather a review of past conditions and an assumption of the role of Providence than an indication in any degree of what the government's legislative intentions are. I suppose, however, that in that regard the government may be excused; for their bill of fare—to quote the language of a former leader of the Liberal party—is undoubtedly very meagre. So far as we on this side of the house are concerned, we do not propose just now to trespass upon your time, Mr. Speaker, nor yet to encourage the people of the country to believe that we are here for the purpose of discussing abstract questions and problems. As long ago as 1878 Sir John Macdonald expressed this view, and his successor in leading the opposition, Mr. Mackenzie, also spoke in the same terms.

It is a well known fact, as those who are students of our parliamentary institutions will remember, that for a period of ten or eleven years at a stretch the debate on the address in reply to the speech from the throne was invariably terminated in a single day, and usually before six o'clock. If the speech means anything, it means that measures will be introduced and that these measures will be