

that in the Imperial House yesterday the question of the appointment of a Canadian Ambassador at Washington was raised, and that one of the members of the Imperial Cabinet declined to give the information sought by two members of the House. The reason alleged in this despatch for the refusal of the Imperial Government to speak on this question is, that it has been understood that the correspondence between the Imperial and Dominion authorities should be kept confidential. I give at first hand the substance of the despatch in question, and I would ask the Prime Minister to inform the House if this correspondence is to remain permanently confidential or whether some day we might know why such correspondence has been exchanged and the reasons for the secrecy.

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: I am not prepared to say that a time will not arrive at some date in the future when the correspondence can be brought down, but I repeat what I have already stated; that according to my judgment it is not desirable in the public interest to bring it down at present. As to the answer which was given in the British House of Commons my attention has not been directed to it. My understanding is that the Imperial Government takes precisely the same view, as to bringing down the correspondence, as was announced to this House by the Canadian Government.

Hon. Mr. FIELDING: The despatch in question rather intimated, without saying so specifically, that the correspondence has been withheld at the request of the Canadian Government. The inference drawn from reading the despatch is that the Imperial Government would be quite willing to bring down the correspondence, but in deference to the Canadian Government they do not feel free to do so.

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: Any impression of that kind is incorrect.

OPIUM AND NARCOTIC DRUG ACT AMENDMENTS.

Hon. NEWTON W. ROWELL (President of the Privy Council) moved the second reading of amendments made by the Senate to Bill 20 to amend the Opium and Narcotic Drug Act.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Explain.

Mr. ROWELL: The amendments are purely formal. I do not think they alter the meaning of the Act as it now stands

in any respect, but it may be that they make the meaning a little clearer. There is no objection to them.

Motion agreed to.

CRIMINAL CODE AMENDMENT ACT (FRENCH VERSION).

Rt. Hon. C. J. DOHERTY (Minister of Justice) moved the second reading of Bill No. 131, (from the Senate) to amend the Criminal Code (French version).

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Will the minister explain the nature of the amendments which have been suggested. They are to correct clerical errors, are they not?

Mr. DOHERTY: Yes, purely and simply to correct errors of translation. There are quite a number of them but I understand they have been carefully gone over by the officers of the House.

Motion agreed to and the House went into committee on the Bill.—Mr. Boivin in the Chair.

On section two—French version amended.

Mr. FIELDING: The serious feature about these amendments is the reflection that is cast upon the translation in so important a matter as a statute of Canada. I should think that is the gravest aspect of the matter. Without knowing very much about it, I should think it a subject that calls for the very serious consideration of the Government and of Parliament.

Mr. DOHERTY: I do not think the gravity of the matter can be exaggerated, but these errors go back to the time of the printing of the Revised Statutes in 1906. Attention was recently called to a few errors with the result that it was thought desirable to have a careful examination made to see if we could not, once for all, get this translation correct. There is no question at all of the gravity of the matter, but the responsibility rests upon whoever was responsible for the translation, in 1906 I think it was, at the time the Revised Statutes were translated. I made some inquiry on the subject and the explanation given to me was that at that time the work was practically entirely in the hands of one man. That work is not of a simple character. Anybody who has ever attempted translation of this character, I think I may safely say, no matter how familiar he is with the two languages, will realize there is nothing more difficult than getting an exact translation; and sometimes when the