

I do not know what the condition of affairs may be, but at all events it is quite evident that there is a considerable disturbance. The point I wish specially to emphasize this morning is the facility with which the people of Canada are calling upon the troops to suppress disturbances on any and every occasion. I presume the troops called for here will only be some volunteers from the city of Toronto and other districts, and probably the permanent corps of the country. Sault Ste. Marie is situated in the Toronto military district. I desire to know what steps have been taken in the premises, or if the government has been advised as to what steps have been taken by the military authorities in that district? I know that the military authorities act independently of the government under the regulations and orders, but still the commanding officer should apprise the government of whatever steps he may take. While the situation there may be, and doubtless is, a very trying one, and while there may be rioting, I think all communities should be encouraged to depend on their own local authorities to as great an extent as possible. I have therefore the honour of asking the right hon. Prime Minister (Rt. Hon. Sir Wilfrid Laurier) if he has in his possession any information regarding the situation at Sault St. Marie, and whether it is such as to justify the calling out of the troops?

The PRIME MINISTER (Rt. Hon. Sir Wilfrid Laurier). Mr. Speaker, I have not seen the hon. Minister of Militia and Defence (Hon. Sir Frederick Borden) this morning, and therefore he may have information which I have not at this moment. But I can give to my hon. friend (Mr. Hughes, Victoria) the information which I have myself. Yesterday I received, personally, several telegrams, all coming from the same party, from the party in charge of the works at Sault Ste. Marie, Mr. Coyne, representing that there were disturbances and riots, that the property of the corporation was threatened, and asking that the government should supply troops to quell the riot. We had to inform him that under such circumstances the government had no authority to act, that it was for the local magistrate, the civil power in charge at Sault Ste. Marie, to determine whether the presence of troops was necessary, and if necessary to call for them. Whether any steps have been taken in that direction by the local authorities at Sault Ste. Marie I have no information at this moment. I may say that there is a disposition to call very often upon the government to send troops. Perhaps the people are unduly scared, but I do not think for my part that there was a very serious condition at Sault Ste. Marie. There was a small disturbance, but in so far as my information goes it was not of a very serious character, and nothing but which could have been con-

Mr. HUGHES (Victoria).

trolled by the local authorities. If the citizens and police are powerless to quell rioters, of course they have a remedy by law, but whether they have availed themselves of it or not I do not know.

#### NATIONAL TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILWAY.

The PRIME MINISTER (Rt. Hon. Sir Wilfrid Laurier) moved the third reading of Bill (No. 235) to provide for the construction of a National Transcontinental Railway.

Mr. R. L. BORDEN (Halifax). Mr. Speaker, before the Bill is read a third time, I would like to offer a few remarks in regard to the general scope and character of the measure which has been introduced by the government as embodied in this Bill and in the contract annexed to it. The discussion has been so thorough on almost every phase of this measure and of the alternative scheme which I had the honour to propose in this House some weeks ago that it will not be necessary now for me to go very minutely into the subject, nor indeed could I, without devoting an enormous amount of time for that purpose, undertake to answer in detail all the criticisms which have been addressed to my own proposal by hon. gentlemen on the other side of the House. It is needless to say that if I should go beyond the confines of this House, and attempt to answer the criticisms of the same character which have been made outside, I would be compelled to inflict myself at still greater length upon the patience of hon. gentlemen at this very late date in the session. There is, however, one aspect of the question, referring more particularly to my alternative proposal, which has been dwelt upon in very great detail by hon. gentlemen opposite. I refer to the question of the cost of the alternative scheme which I have suggested. I will not attempt to answer all these gentlemen, as perhaps under other circumstances I might be inclined to do, but, as all of their extended criticism has been summed up in the speech of the Postmaster General—which I regard as embodying on behalf of the government all criticisms of that character which could possibly be made upon my alternative proposal—I shall take the speech of the Postmaster General as a fair type of the criticism which has been addressed to the House and the country, with regard to the proposal which I had the honour of making some few weeks ago. In the first place, the House and the country should know, that my hon. friend (Hon. Sir William Mulock) explained that he especially desired to make a perfectly fair and business-like comparison between the cost of the scheme as embodied in this Bill, and the cost of the scheme which I outlined. Let it be understood also that the Postmaster General repeatedly adopted the figures which have