

zens of the British Empire. Hon. members of the House need not be reminded of the importance of raw materials in the conduct of this war. The control of raw materials was one of the great factors which enabled the Allies to succeed in this struggle, and the denial to Germany of access to essential raw materials was one of the important factors which reduced her to the position where she was compelled to conclude peace. The control of raw materials was one of the subjects which engaged much time and thought at the conference, and the action of the conference was embodied in three resolutions, the published portions of which I shall take the liberty of reading to the House, afterwards making one or two observations on them. Resolution No. 3 reads:

(1) The Conference agrees that it is necessary to secure for the British Empire and the belligerent Allies the command of certain essential raw materials in order to enable them to repair the effects of the War as soon as possible and to safeguard their industrial requirements.

(2) The Conference is of opinion that the Governments of the British Empire should make such arrangements amongst themselves as will ensure that essential raw materials produced within the Empire shall be available for the above purposes, and should arrange with the Allied Countries to utilize for the same purposes essential raw materials produced in those countries.

Paragraph 3 of the resolution is not printed. It set out a list of materials which were considered essential for the continued prosecution of the war and for the maintenance of the industrial life of the nation. It is only necessary, perhaps, to mention the two which we practically control in this country, namely, nickel and asbestos, both of which were included in the list. I believe we control seventy or eighty per cent of the world's nickel supply, and a similar percentage of the world's asbestos supply. In those two essential raw materials, Canada holds a dominating and controlling position. Paragraph 4 of the resolution is as follows:

That this Conference has considered the provisions of the Imports and Exports (Temporary Control) Bill now before the Imperial Parliament, and is of opinion that, whilst the circumstances of the different parts of the Empire differ widely as regards the extent to which it may prove desirable to pass similar legislation, the respective Governments should nevertheless take such action as may be deemed expedient to enable the objects of resolution 3 to be fully carried out.

To assist the Governments in determining their action in this respect the Conference recommends:—

(1) that a committee of its members should first consider the possible methods in each part [Mr. Rowell.]

of the Empire of obtaining command of each of the essential Raw Materials specified in resolution 3.

(2) that the Governments represented at the Conference should, in the light of the information collected by their representatives on this Committee, consult with the representatives of the producers and trades concerned as to the method of obtaining command of best suited to each individual commodity.

A committee of the conference was appointed in pursuance of that resolution. It held many meetings. It took into consideration all those raw materials essential for war and for the maintenance of industries, enumerated in resolution 3. It tabulated the information, showing the available sources of supplies throughout the world, how far those sources were controlled within the Empire and how far within Allied countries, and it outlined the best methods of developing and utilizing those raw materials for the benefit of the Empire and the Allies. That particular information gathered in that way was not published; it is kept in the possession of the Government, because to publish the information at that time would have been to give it to the enemies of the Empire.

Mr. BUREAU: The minister says that a sub-committee was appointed and suggestions made as to the best methods to meet the views expressed by the resolution. Were those suggestions kept secret, or are they to be distributed amongst the various self-governing dominions, so that common action may be taken on the subject?

Mr. ROWELL: These suggestions are all distributed as confidential documents amongst the different governments. The full report of the sub-committee, which was adopted by the conference was not published in the record, but was published as a confidential document and is in possession of the cabinets of all the dominions, giving them full information as to raw materials, their sources, their present state of development, the Empire's needs, and with suggestions in many cases as to their development and utilization.

Mr. BUREAU: Does that include the provincial governments?

Mr. ROWELL: No, only the Federal Government in each case. The third resolution dealing with this matter is No. 23. It reads:

(1) The Conference having considered the report of the committee on raw materials request His Majesty's Government to communicate this report forthwith to the Governments of the Dominions and India and to ascertain their views on the appropriate action to be taken.