

Mr. DEVLIN: When we consider the resolution shall we be sitting as a court of appeal, or as revising the action of the Senate?

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: I am not quite sure, still, that I understand my hon. friend. The resolution before the House is for the purpose of eliciting the opinion of the House upon the Treaty. The fact that the Senate has given its opinion already does not affect the action of this House in any way.

Mr. DEVLIN: Has the Bill which my right hon. friend has just introduced already been introduced in the Senate?

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: Certainly not. My hon. friend's experience as a member would indicate to him that no such procedure is possible.

Mr. DEVLIN: My experience in this matter is somewhat similar to that I have had during the past few years. I had been accustomed to Acts being passed by Parliament, but my experience of late has taught me that Parliament has given place to a Cabinet, and that we now proceed in most cases by Order in Council.

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: I do not appreciate the relevancy of the hon. gentleman's statement, inasmuch as this Bill is now being presented to Parliament and we are not dealing with the matter by Order in Council.

Motion agreed to, and Bill read the first time.

INTERPRETATION ACT AMENDMENT.

On motion of Hon. Mr. Doherty (Minister of Justice), Bill No. 4 to amend the Interpretation Act, was introduced and read the first time.

THE GOVERNOR GENERAL'S SPEECH. ADDRESS IN REPLY.

Consideration of the motion of Mr. Howard Primrose Whidden for an address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his speech at the opening of the session, resumed from Thursday, September 4.

Mr. MARIE JOSEPH DEMERS (St. Johns and Iberville): Mr. Speaker, although I have no desire to prolong this debate unduly, there are some questions in regard to which I should like to express my views and feelings at this session. We have been told that the main purpose for which we are assembled is the ratification of the Treaty of Peace and the Covenant of the

[Sir Robert Borden.]

League of Nations, but it is to be hoped that before prorogation we shall realize that there is something more urgent that faces us, and that it is incumbent on us to turn our attention to other questions of greater moment and of more importance for Canada than the consideration of the Peace Treaty. When I say this, Sir, I trust there will be no misapprehension on the part of this House as to my views concerning this question. I wish it to be understood that I in no sense lack an appreciation of the great importance of the Peace Conference and the Treaty which it has evolved. The fact is quite otherwise. At the same time, however, I must say that so far as I can judge there is no reason why this Parliament should ratify the Treaty, because that ratification has already been given by the only authority in the circumstances—His Majesty the King as representing the whole British Empire to which we belong. The Imperial authorities, I am of opinion, do not see any necessity for action on the part of Canada or any other of the Dominions in order that the Peace Treaty and the Covenant of the League of Nations may become operative so far as the British Empire is concerned; and I think that from the international standpoint the interpretation of the Imperial Parliament regarding our status as it affects other nations and powers is right. For myself, coming to the conclusion that our participation in the ratification of the Treaty is unnecessary, I cannot see why we should engage in any consideration of its terms, when the only direct consequence will be to bind ourselves to military and financial undertakings in the event of the violation of the Treaty by any of the contracting parties should the League of Nations decide that action on our part is imperative. What shall we receive in return for our assumption of these obligations and responsibilities? What clause of the Treaty can apply to Canada in the future apart from the obligations I have just mentioned? What clause of the Treaty can Canada violate? We are not a great power; we are not even a small nation; and there are no clauses of protection or security in the Treaty which can apply to Canada or to the colonies or dominions of the Empire. Why, therefore, should we endeavour to be a party to this pact? I think that the best and only thing that we could do would be to refrain from any undertakings which may involve us in future obligations. It seems to me that our palpable duty is to devote ourselves entirely and exclusively to the industrial and econ-