

he also referred to the arrest of a member of this parliament. He read certain legal opinions with respect to the procedure followed in that arrest, and he referred to a question of which I had given him notice and which I intended to put at the proper time today. I believe everyone will agree that these important developments have justified the bringing up of this matter at this time; therefore, I think I should put on record the question that I had proposed asking. The Prime Minister has only partly answered it. The question was as follows:

In answer to questions directed to him yesterday, the Prime Minister indicated he would make a statement on Monday next in connection with espionage.

Since that time a letter has appeared in the press, reported to have been directed to certain members of parliament from one of those already detained in this investigation, complaining of a disregard of his constitutional rights; and, in addition, this morning's press carries a report of the arrest of a member of parliament, while parliament is in session, in connection with a matter related to this investigation.

My question is: In view of these incidents and in view of the consequent mounting public interest in this matter, will the Prime Minister make to-day the statement he proposes to make rather than delay it until Monday?

As I said, the Prime Minister has made a statement referring to these matters in part. If my question had been answered in the affirmative we would have had a fuller statement. I presume, the matter having gone this far, that the Prime Minister does not feel that he can say any more at the moment. Whether he does or not I should like to say this further word, that the refusal of habeas corpus proceedings, the holding of men without a legal charge against them, without the right of bail and without the right to have counsel, is a serious matter to all who pride themselves on the principles of British justice. The Canadian people will be behind the government in searching out and in punishing crimes against the state, but the Canadian people are not in sympathy with any departure from the regular procedures of our courts, established over long years, for dealing with matters of this kind, unless the circumstances are most unusual, such as, for instance, the safety of the state being in danger.

I am sure the house appreciates the information which the Prime Minister has given us to-day; whether he cares to say anything further now is a matter for him to decide.

[Mr. Bracken.]

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I should like to say a further word. I thought I had pretty well answered or adequately answered the questions which my hon. friend had intended to ask me; but may I say to him at once that with what he has said about the importance of securing the freedom of the individual, his right to habeas corpus proceedings and anything else that will seek to preserve individual liberty I am in complete accord, and I would be the last person in this country to wish to see the liberty of any individual curtailed in any way at all that it is possible to avoid, short of, to use my hon. friend's own words, the safety of the state being the main consideration.

Yesterday I stated that I would wish to make a statement at length on Monday purposely in order that hon. members might have an opportunity before my statement is made to read the interim reports of the commissioners, the two reports which have been tabled. One report has been tabled only this afternoon. Hon. members have not yet seen that report. I do not believe they have seen any reference in the press to what it contains, and I do ask that hon. members of this house read that report from beginning to close before Monday's discussion on this very serious matter takes place. I would also ask that hon. members read the first report from beginning to close before we proceed with further discussion. I believe that hon. members will be very deeply impressed by the statements which these reports contain. I would also ask hon. members to remember in reading these reports that they have been prepared by two justices of the Supreme Court of Canada, gentlemen who, above all, would be anxious to maintain in every way possible the full freedom and liberty of individuals in our country.

With the permission of the house, Mr. Speaker, I move:

That two thousand five hundred copies in the English language and one thousand copies in the French language of the documents relating to the proceedings of the royal commission, established by order in council P.C. 411 of February 5, 1946, and including the first and second interim reports of the royal commission, laid on the table of the house on the 14th and 15th of March instant, be printed forthwith, and that standing order 64 in relation thereto be suspended.

As I mentioned yesterday, I arranged to have these reports printed without waiting for the authority of the house, feeling quite sure that authority would be given, inasmuch as I took the course I did for the convenience of hon. members.

Motion agreed to.