

STORES ON INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY LINE.

Rt. Hon. Sir WILFRID LAURIER (Prime Minister). May I be permitted to call attention to an answer I gave on Monday to a question put by the hon. member for Huntingdon (Mr. R. N. Walsh). The question was as follows :

1. Have any representations been made to the government regarding the stores or buildings placed on the Intercolonial boundary line ?

2. If so, what was the nature of such representations ?

3. Does the government intend taking any action in regard to their regulation ?

The answer I gave was :

The government have received no representations on this subject.

I have since ascertained there was a typographical error in the question ; instead of being the Intercolonial Railway line, it should read the International Boundary Line. I have to inform the hon. member that we have received from Rev. Dr. S. D. Chown, of Toronto, a communication on the subject. It appears that stores are built exactly on the boundary line, one part in Canada and one part in the United States, and when offences are committed in these stores they are difficult to reach and difficult to punish. The question is one of a rather delicate nature, and could only be effectually dealt with by treaty between the two governments.

THE BUDGET SPEECH.

Hon. GEO. E. FOSTER (North Toronto). Before the orders of the day are called, I would ask the Finance Minister whether he is prepared to say if the Budget speech will come on before or after the holidays. Some arrangement might be made in regard to it.

Hon. W. S. FIELDING (Minister of Finance). Until the conclusion of the debate on the address I would hardly be prepared to make any announcement on the subject.

ADDRESS IN ANSWER TO HIS EXCELLENCY'S SPEECH.

House resumed adjourned debate on the motion of Mr. Hall for an address to His Excellency the Governor General in reply to his speech at the opening of the session.

Mr. SAMUEL BARKER (East Hamilton). Mr. Speaker, I think we should be wanting in our duty to the people of Canada if we passed this resolution without further discussion of that paragraph in His Excellency's speech from the Throne which relates to the Quebec Bridge disaster and I propose, before I take my seat, to move an amendment on this subject. It is not my intention, Mr. Speaker, to enter into any ques-

Mr. PUGSLEY.

tion of the legal liability of the Phoenix Bridge Company or of the Quebec Bridge Company for this disaster. This is not the time or place for such a discussion and, moreover, we have not yet all the facts that are necessary to be known in that regard. But, Mr. Speaker, I do propose to discuss the accountability of ministers for their connection with that great work and for the disaster which led to such loss of life, which, in a moment, without warning, sent some seventy or more men, all unprepared, to face their maker, which also hurled in utter destruction to the bottom of the St. Lawrence, a great national work which had taken years in production, which will take years to replace, and upon which have been spent millions of public money which might as well, or even better, have been cast into the sea. I say, Sir, that this is a national work and no one will dispute that it has been so treated by the government. No man can question that it was and is a work in which the people of Canada were and are deeply interested. It has been so treated by the government, and indeed, upon no other basis or consideration could any ministry have asked parliament to undertake the obligations which have been undertaken on behalf of the Quebec Bridge Company. A fair appreciation of the relative importance of the bridge as compared with the great transcontinental railway project may be had in this way : The estimated cost of the bridge—from \$7,000,000 to \$8,000,000—corresponds to the estimated cost of about 180 miles of railway, and if unfortunately the Quebec Bridge Company should be found accountable for the disaster, or if the Quebec Bridge Company should be unable to recover from the Phoenix Bridge Company, the money that has already been paid to them, the ultimate cost of the bridge will probably be \$12,000,000, or equal to the estimated cost of fully 300 miles of railway. I think I need say no more to impress upon this House and the people the enormous importance to this country of the subject which hon. gentlemen opposite were dealing with when they guaranteed the bonds or securities of the Quebec Bridge Company. I may perhaps pause here for a moment to say—and I think that hon. gentlemen in the House will join me in what I am about to say—that I sincerely hope and trust that, apart from any question of legal liability upon the part of either company, the government has seen fit to see that substantial care has been taken of, and relief afforded to the people who were dependent upon the unfortunate men who perished in that catastrophe. I do not think that anybody would desire that the government should neglect what is their duty in that regard, although I do not pretend for a moment that there is any liability on the part of the government to these people. That bridge, Mr. Speaker, when completed, will be the greatest bridge in the world. The