

shown to anybody outside of the cabinet. If anybody got knowledge of it, the means by which he got knowledge of it, is one of those secrets as to which I have no information to give; but we know from past experience that such a thing sometimes happens.

Mr. T. S. SPROULE (East Grey). The usual course is that when a motion is made by parliament for papers, the minister states that such papers will be brought down as is not confidential. When that statement is made by a minister of the Crown, parliament usually accepts it as sufficient and refrains from prosecuting the inquiry further. That was not done in the present instance by the government. If I understood the Prime Minister correctly, he contends that when a minister of the Crown states that he brought down all information, the statement only implies such information as is not confidential. I do not think that parliament should be asked to assume any such thing. Todd's parliamentary government says:

It is imperative that parliament shall be duly informed of everything that may be necessary to explain the policy and proceedings of government in any part of the empire, and the fullest information is communicated by government to both Houses from time to time, upon matters of public concern.

This certainly was a matter of public concern, for it is in parliament that authoritative statements are made. Then he goes on to say:

Whenever it is declared by the responsible servants of the Crown that any information sought for in parliament could not be supplied without inconvenience to the public service, or for other sufficient reasons, the House refrains from insisting upon its production.

But if such documents are in existence, and the government do not desire to bring them down, it is as I understand their duty to say to parliament: We have brought down all documents pertaining to this subject unless those of a confidential character; and when that statement is made, nothing more is said. Todd goes on to say:

And if the government object to produce any documents, on the ground that they are of a private and confidential description, it is not usual to insist upon their being furnished.

That is where I think the right hon. the premier failed in doing his duty, in not mentioning that there were other documents, but that owing to their being of a confidential character, he did not regard it in the public interest to bring them down. Todd goes on further to say:

It must always be remembered that all public transactions of state are necessarily official—

This being a transaction of state, the document must necessarily be official, and ought to be communicated to parliament.

—and that no public officer would be justified in withholding from official record and access, any document, emanating from himself.

Now, there must have been an answer to that document—from whom? From the premier. On what? On a question which has engaged the attention of this House during two sessions. According to Todd's interpretation of parliamentary government, that was an official answer, and therefore ought to have been given to parliament. We have no information in regard to that.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I may say to my hon. friend at once that there never was any written answer, either confidential or official, to that document.

Mr. SPROULE. Of course, that is a sufficient answer. I want to refer to another statement made by the premier which I think deserves some passing attention. In answer to the question why this document was read at all, he replied that it was read because of the repeated contention that the Grand Trunk Pacific Company would have built their line from North Bay to the Pacific ocean without asking for any aid, had they been allowed to do it under the charter which they desired to get from parliament. Why, that contention was put forward time after time in the last session of parliament as well as in this session, and why was the document not then given to parliament as an answer? Why was it delayed to the last moment, until the debate was practically closed? It certainly could not have been because of its confidential character. If the government were compelled to give it in order to defend themselves and to refute that argument, they would have given it at the commencement of this debate rather than at the end.

Motion agreed to.

PROHIBITION OF CIGARETTES.

The following resolution, moved by Mr. Wm. S. Maclaren (Huntingdon) and adopted in Committee of the Whole, was read the second time, and agreed to, on division:

That it is expedient to bring in a Bill to prohibit the importation, manufacture and sale of cigarettes.

COMPANIES' ACT AMENDMENT.

Bill (No. 75) to amend the Companies Act, 1902, (Mr. Cowan) read the second time and House went into committee thereon.

On section 1,

1. Section 5 of the Companies Act, 1902, is amended by adding thereto the following subsection:—