

Imperial Cable Merger

Mr. VENIOT: The only report we have that I know of is the report of this commission which has been laid on the table, and of which I believe the hon. gentleman has a copy. We certainly did not take objection to any of the recommendations made in that report.

Mr. HEAPS: But did not Sir Campbell Stuart make any recommendations to the government? Or did he just simply sign the report and submit it to the government? I think it is customary in a case of this character where so much is involved that the gentleman representing the Dominion government should make a separate report to his government as to what his attitude was on the question.

Mr. VENIOT: No, there is nothing that I have other than what was contained in the correspondence laid on the table. There is some correspondence in connection with the one matter of the merger, which the home government will not allow us to make public yet, nor will the other contracting parties. Apart from that, I have laid everything on the table.

Mr. HEAPS: Has the minister available for the house a statement showing the receipts and expenditures of the Pacific cable board including the receipts and expenditures for the last two years?

Mr. VENIOT: Yes, I think we have.

Mr. HEAPS: Would the minister give it to the house?

Mr. VENIOT: I have not got it with me. I did not think the question would arise, otherwise I would have had it on hand. Certainly I think the report given with the details it contains, which have been submitted to the house, would be sufficient in that respect. If the hon. gentleman is determined to delay the passage of the bill by his insistent demand, I will endeavour to see what I can do to obtain the information.

Mr. HEAPS: I think it is only fair. There is no particular hurry for this bill.

Mr. VENIOT: There is an absolute rush.

Mr. HEAPS: That is rather surprising, Mr. Chairman. A couple of weeks ago we had no idea this bill was to be introduced. Members of the house were not even to be consulted in the matter. To-day we are asked to pass a bill regarding which the Postmaster General himself has not the particulars. I ask for the information because there has been a difference of opinion between the Minister of Justice and myself regarding certain [Mr. Heaps.]

financial matters pertaining to the Pacific cable board. The minister stated that the last year or so the cable board was losing money.

Mr. LAPOINTE: Yes.

Mr. HEAPS: I may be permitted to read this extract from the British Hansard of November 21, 1928. It is from a speech by Mr. Baker. He says:

My information is that although the traffic receipts on the Pacific cables for 1927-28 were down by £80,000 as compared with the previous year, that is about 17 per cent, the expenditure was reduced by about £32,000, and despite the drop in receipts, which was mainly in the cheaper traffic, the surplus available for division between the governments was £42,100, after devoting £77,544 to the payment of interest and repayment of capital and placing £10,000 to reserve account.

Mr. LAPOINTE: That is what I said. If my hon. friend reads my remarks of the other day he will find that those are exactly the figures I gave. As a matter of fact, from 1903 to 1916 there was a period of deficit, and the share which the government of Canada had to pay on those deficits amounted to \$900,000. From 1916 the period of surpluses began. And they were to some extent large surpluses—so much so that at one time the board decided to duplicate its cable from the Fiji islands to British Columbia, against the protests of the Canadian government, who pointed out that wireless would be a strong factor in competition as against the cable. The result has shown this to have been the fact, and since 1927, since the beam has been put into operation, the profits have dwindled. May I say to my hon. friend at once that he is wrong when he says that it is the Canadian Marconi Wireless who are responsible for this; it is the big main wireless between England and Australia, which has been a great factor in the competition. That wireless is owned at one end by the British government and at the other end by the Amalgamated Wireless, the majority of the shares in which are owned by the Australian government. The Canadian Wireless came afterwards; and surely my hon. friend does not object to there being a wireless in Canada and from Canada.

The profits in 1926-27 were £100,000, but the following year, 1927-28, as my hon. friend has read from the British Hansard, the profits had come down to £42,000, and for 1928-29 zero is anticipated owing to the decrease in business.

I do not see why there should be such objection on the part of my hon. friend to this bill. After all, Canada entered the scheme by way of contributing to imperial inter-