

man, who has done so much to raise the standard of this House, to let us know whether as a rule public bills should not be dealt with as I have suggested. After a public bill has been considered in Committee of the Whole, we could, if necessary, send it to a select committee in order to get expert opinion on the measure.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: Does the honourable member mean that a public bill is first of all dealt with in Committee of the Whole, and after being reported is, if deemed necessary, referred to a select committee?

Hon. Mr. CASGRAIN: No; it is dealt with here in the House.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: I know, but it is not correct to say that public bills are dealt with only in Committee of the Whole. For example, in either House of Parliament it would never be considered improper that the revision of the Bank Act should be referred to the Committee on Banking and Commerce. A select committee should deal with measures of that character, and I think it should deal with this measure. I take it that the report of the committee, which is made after the second reading, in no way prevents the measure from being referred to Committee of the Whole before third reading.

Hon. Mr. CASGRAIN: It always depends on the motion of this House. The House can do what it likes.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: Yes.

Hon. Mr. CASGRAIN: I was calling the attention of the right honourable leader to what I consider is the proper practice, that public bills should be dealt with in this House. Would it not be well for us to revert to the old custom of dealing with public bills in Committee of the Whole? Then, if we found it necessary, we could refer them to select committees to secure further information from outside sources. I am merely suggesting the propriety of this course.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: Any public bills will be referred to Committee of the Whole if such is the desire of honourable members. But the question I was putting—and I am not certain yet what the right answer should be—is whether or not the reference of a public bill to Committee of the whole should precede or follow the reference to the select committee.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: I have not recently read the rules relating to this matter, but I may state what has been the practice for a number of years.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: I know the practice in the House of Commons.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: When I was responsible for Government legislation in this House my practice was this. If a Bill presented to the House contained anything of a technical nature, or anything requiring technical advice, which would be much more easily secured by sending the Bill to a standing committee, I never hesitated to suggest that it should go there first.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: That is what I think.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: Then twenty-five or forty or fifty members of the Senate had the advantage of first-hand information from men in the department who had drafted the Bill. When the Bill was returned to the Senate it could be sent to Committee of the Whole if further discussion was deemed desirable, or if further amendments were to be considered. Did we not last year send the Railway Bill to the Standing Committee on Railways, Telegraphs and Harbours in order to secure evidence which could not be obtained here? I know of many Bills in regard to which it was thought desirable to secure information directly from the experts of the department that had to do with the drafting of the Bill. There was the Pension Bill, for instance. We had been operating since 1867, I think, under three special Acts, and were consolidating those Acts in order to deal with pensions from a certain date under a new system. With the exception of three or four honourable gentlemen who had given special study to the matter, no one would have dared to enter into a discussion of the Bill in Committee of the Whole. After the Committee on Banking and Commerce had spent three or four days over the Bill, and had heard the experts of various departments, and the Superintendent of Insurance, we were in a position to discuss it intelligently in this Chamber. I do not think anyone can point to a rule directing us to send a Bill to Committee of the Whole before sending it to a select committee. I think that matter is in the hands of the House.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: I think the procedure outlined by the honourable gentleman (Hon. Mr. Dandurand) is the proper procedure, and it is the one which was followed in the House of Commons, with whose practice I am much more familiar than I am with that of this House. The right of every member of this House to insist that a public Bill be committed to the Committee