

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: My honourable friend is not right. The report was agreed to by everybody, but my honourable friend the joint chairman (Hon. Mr. Beaubien), in my hearing and in the hearing of others, stated that he reserved the right to say what he is proposing to say now, and I repeated it to the honourable member who was right beside me—I forget who it was. This is not at all in conflict with the report. We could have made a minority report, or whatever else you might call it, because what was suggested involves an expenditure which the Government did not feel like making. It is only right, therefore, that the honourable gentleman (Hon. Mr. Beaubien) should have the privilege of stating to the House something which is not a dissent from the report at all. We shall be absolutely loyal to the report. Thus we shall be acting consistently with it in every way. In face of the statement of the honourable leader of the Government (Hon. Mr. Dandurand) we could not recommend in our report that this work be done; and I said so at the meeting of the committee. But we have a right to say to the House that we should like the Government to take upon itself the responsibility of having the work done. It could not be done unless the Government assumed that responsibility. I think that is all that my honourable friend (Hon. Mr. Beaubien) wished to say.

Hon. Mr. BEAUBIEN: That is all.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: We ought not to discuss the merits of any possible solution of the problem, and the interruption by the leader of the Government for the purpose of intimating that was quite proper. We have agreed to a report, and we are standing by it. But we felt—I will express it, if my honourable friend from Montarville wishes me to—that we were not competent to weigh the conflicting evidence presented by two sets of witnesses. As honourable members know, the two railways unfortunately expressed opposing views. We thought, therefore, that the Government should employ a firm of engineers and accountants to analyse the facts gathered by our committee and report what they think could be done; and if they conclude that certain savings are possible we should like them to specify how these would be arrived at, just what reductions in service would be necessary, if any, and so on. We could not go any further, because the matter is entirely one for the Government. I do not suggest that the cost of such work would be trivial; on the contrary, I admit it would likely be considerable.

In any event, the committee could not have made any other report than it did make. After all the time and work spent on our study of the problem, it would have been folly to attempt to deal with any merits in the case unless we could deal with them in an adequate, complete and illuminating manner for the advantage of the country in particular and of the Government too, in some measure; and this we were unable to do. There was no alternative to putting further study over until next session. But it seemed to us that in the interim an authoritative finding might be made as to just what savings, if any, are possible, and through what means they are possible.

Hon. Mr. MURDOCK: May I ask my right honourable friend whom he means by "we"?

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: I refer only to the honourable senator from Montarville (Hon. Mr. Beaubien) and myself, though possibly I have represented the views of others too.

Hon. Mr. MURDOCK: The question in my mind was whether other members of the committee would concur in those views.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: Anyone can express what he wishes.

Hon. Mr. MURDOCK: But surely he cannot express his thoughts as the apparent viewpoint of the committee.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: No.

Hon. Mr. BEAUBIEN: I did not do that.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: We could not recommend to the Senate that a firm of accountants and engineers be employed, because the Senate cannot authorize expenditures, but we did desire to ask the leader of the House (Hon. Mr. Dandurand) if he would request the Government to take the responsibility of having a complete analysis made of the facts gathered by our committee.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: May I be permitted—

Hon. Mr. BEAUBIEN: I have just a few words to add.

Hon. Mr. MURDOCK: Shall I have permission to follow with a few remarks?

Hon. Mr. BEAUBIEN: The right honourable leader on this side of the House (Right Hon. Mr. Meighen) has expressed my view, and very much better than I could have done myself. I want to add just a few words. We have gathered a lot of evidence and have recommended that the committee's