

THE SENATE

Thursday, March 10, 1927.

The Senate met at 3 p.m., the Speaker in the Chair.

Prayers and routine proceedings.

SENATE CONSTITUTION AND APPOINTMENTS

INQUIRY

Hon. Mr. McMEANS inquired of the Government:

1. If any promise, or pledge, whether written or verbal, is required by the present Government from any appointee, or proposed appointee, to the Senate, of any nature or kind whatsoever.

2. If any understanding exists between the Government and any appointee, or proposed appointee, to the Senate, as to the future course such appointee shall take in regard to any proposed change in the Constitution of the Senate.

3. If any promise or pledge of any kind whatsoever, whether written or verbal, has been given by any appointee to the Senate to the present Government, as to the future course which the appointee shall take in regard to any measure affecting the Senate.

Hon. Mr. TANNER: inquired of the Government:

1. Did the Prime Minister, Right Hon. W. L. Mackenzie King, make the following statement while addressing a public meeting in the City of Regina, in Saskatchewan, in August last (about August 17 or 18), which statement was published in the newspaper known as the Regina Leader, on August 18, 1926, in the following words:

"In appointing members of the Senate I have exacted an undertaking from the appointee that when the Liberal Government brought in a measure of Senate reform he would support that. Every Liberal appointed to the Senate has given that undertaking."

2. Who is the member of the Senate who first gave the Prime Minister such an undertaking; and when was it given?

3. What are the names of other members of the Senate who have given such an undertaking; and when, respectively, were the undertakings given?

4. Are the undertakings or any of them in writing and signed by the members of the Senate giving them?

5. What is the language in which such undertakings respectively are given, orally or in writing?

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: I have an answer for the honourable gentleman from Winnipeg (Hon. Mr. McMeans), and I would ask leave to answer the other question, put on the Order Paper by the honourable gentleman from Pictou (Hon. Mr. Tanner), at the same time.

The policy of the Liberal party on the question of Senate reform was proclaimed officially

at the last two general elections by the Leader of the Liberal party, the present Prime Minister.

The question generally asked of the members recently appointed to this Chamber has borne upon their views concerning the question of Senate reform.

As members of the Liberal party and adherents to its policy, they have not hesitated to declare that they were favourable to a reform of the Senate which would bring this Chamber nearer the modern and democratic conception of a second Chamber, with the clear understanding that said changes would be introduced and carried on in conformity with the requirement of the constitution.

Hon. Mr. SCHAFFNER: A good strong constitution.

Hon. Mr. CASGRAIN: Respecting vested rights.

Hon. Mr. McMEANS: Does the honourable gentleman think that is a complete answer to the question on the Order Paper?

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: I think so.

Hon. Mr. McMEANS: I asked whether any promise had been given, written or verbal.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: I may say that the questions asked were mainly oral.

Right Hon. Sir GEORGE E. FOSTER: Would it be too much to ask that the pledged members rise?

CANADA'S RAILWAY PROBLEMS

INQUIRY AND DISCUSSION

Hon. G. D. ROBERTSON rose in accordance with the following notice:

That he will call the attention of the Government to certain matters affecting Canada's transportation activities and problems, and will inquire of the Government whether or not it has any definite policy in relation thereto, and if so, will ask that it be publicly declared.

He said: Honourable gentlemen, this notice was placed upon the Order Paper for the purpose of bringing to the attention of the House and to others, I hope, who might be interested in the subject, some points of importance touching transportation problems and activities that I think ought to be considered at this time, when our friends of the Board of Railway Commissioners are engaged in the very difficult and delicate task imposed upon them by Order in Council last year.

Perhaps a word or two reminiscent of Canadian railway activities might be of assistance in forming a conclusion. I would first call attention to the outstanding fact that probably no country in the world has increased its steam