

The CHAIRMAN: I feel uncomfortable about it. I am inclined to think Mr. Diefenbaker's motion is all right. It will come from this committee of parliament. They will have passed a resolution inviting these attorneys-general and these law societies to communicate with the Minister of Justice giving their views as to the power of the parliament of Canada to enact a comprehensive bill of rights applicable to all Canada.

Mr. HANSELL: I am not tremendously opposed to the motion.

Mr. BEAUDOIN: Is it wise for us to pass a resolution of this sort asking the attorneys-general to make a study of this order of reference, and whatever may be involved in it, knowing in advance that this committee as now constituted is not going to deal with that?

The CHAIRMAN: There will be a recommendation.

Mr. BEAUDOIN: There may be no committee next year, or the committee next year may not be composed of the same men. It may not be the opinion of the members of the committee at the next session that they should ask for the view of the provinces. They may not decide to follow the procedure that we are now. I am only expressing doubts as to whether we have the right or whether we should not have the courtesy of waiting until the next committee meets and let them decide themselves. We are asking the attorneys-general now to study a matter with which we will not deal. We know they will not have time to present it to us this year. As far as the committee next session that committee may not be composed of the same men. I may not be a member and everyone else here may not be members. The committee next year may say, "Well, we are sorry. The committee last year asked you for that but you have worked for nothing because we do not wish to do it that way."

Mr. HACKETT: That is true but that is not practical. We are merely stating that we hope that next year's committee will use the information for which we are asking.

Mr. BEAUDOIN: That is in the report?

Mr. HACKETT: He will tell them that when he writes.

Mr. HARKNESS: Many other committees have done much the same sort of thing. The Veterans Affairs Committee which met in 1945 asked the department and the Legion and various other people to have material ready for the committee which was going to succeed it in 1946. Other committees have done the same thing. I do not see anything out of the way in our committee asking that certain information be ready for the next committee.

Mr. HACKETT: If they ask for it.

Mr. CROLL: Committees do not change much generally.

The CHAIRMAN: Any attorney-general may very well say, "We will wait and see." They may very well take that position. We cannot compel attorneys-general to even answer this letter or to submit their views, but it is the wish of this committee that they do that, that they express their views as soon as possible to the attorney-general of Canada.

Mrs. STRUM: Would we not be correct in assuming that they would be anxious to have the chance to do that?

The CHAIRMAN: I do not know.

Mrs. STRUM: Do you not think that the provinces would be anxious to do that? Judging from Mr. Diefenbaker's statement as to the number of people who have shown interest and concern and have written to him I think the provinces, which are even more vitally concerned, should welcome this opportunity of being able to do this.