

the east. He said that the eastern members of the House were wasting time. I confess that I expected a good deal more from that hon. gentleman. I did not expect that he would rise in a spirit of banter and take upon himself the right to lecture this side of the House upon what is the proper course to adopt. I think it is the proper course to adopt to insist that hon. members of the House should be in possession of such information as they are entitled to. I think this is a matter of such gravity that the government cannot afford to entirely ignore it. These hon. gentlemen sit silent in their places afraid to make a declaration upon a matter that is so pressing in its nature that it does not seem to me that a single moment should be lost in placing before the committee the information which is asked for. If hon. gentlemen were desirous to get on with the work they would give the information that we are asking for. I regret that we have not accomplished more than we have up to this time, and I would ask the hon. gentleman who is now leading the House (Hon. Mr. Fielding) if he thinks it is the best way to get on with the work of the committee to pursue the course which he is pursuing in regard to this question. I am sure that there is nothing about it that the committee cannot fairly ask to be given to it. On the other hand, I am well persuaded that the course adopted by hon. gentlemen opposite will not facilitate the work of the committee.

Mr. HUGHES (Victoria). Mr. Chairman, I would take the liberty of asking the hon. gentleman who is now leading the House (Hon. Mr. Fielding), in view of the very serious statement that has been made here to-night, that the present hon. Minister of Marine and Fisheries (Hon. Mr. Préfontaine) said that this division had been sanctioned by the government, if an Order in Council has been passed, or if any action has been taken by the government in reference to dividing this office, and, furthermore, I would like to ask the hon. Minister of Public Works (Hon. Mr. Sutherland) if it is true that he voluntarily handed over such work as was too onerous for him and that he was willing to make over to the hon. Minister of Marine and Fisheries the work which was outlined by that hon. gentleman in his speech in Montreal. I would ask the Finance Minister, who is leading the House so ably, and in his own inimitable manner: what are the facts of the case?

The MINISTER OF FINANCE. I much regret that I am unable to add anything to the very valuable information I have already contributed to the debate.

Mr. HUGHES (Victoria). I wish to ask the Minister of Public Works (Hon. Mr. Sutherland) if the statement made by the Minister of Marine and Fisheries is true; that he voluntarily said he could not carry

on all these works and that he was willing to hand over certain of them to his brother minister from Quebec.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. I do not imagine that the statement was ever made.

Mr. HUGHES (Victoria). That is a serious reflection on 'La Patrie.'

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. So far as I am personally concerned I never said to the Premier, or to any other person either in this House or out of it, that I wanted the portfolio of Public Works or any other position in the government.

Mr. HUGHES (Victoria). Or did not ask to be relieved from these works.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. If I had my own way I do not think I would occupy any position in the government. I consented on the request of the premier to take the position. I think, Mr. Chairman, this matter has been very fully discussed.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. There are a few items under the consideration of the House.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Hear, hear.

The MINISTER OF PUBLIC WORKS. The premier has made an announcement to the House on this matter. So far as these individual items are concerned they are matters of routine for maintaining the plant that belongs to the government, and whether there should be changes or not it would make very little difference. We have had a very lengthy discussion and we know what the feeling of the opposition is, and we might proceed with the business of the House. When the Prime Minister is in his place, he will make any announcement he has to make in regard to the matter.

Hon. Mr. TARTE. I did not expect that this debate would be raised to-night, but the question we are discussing is of pretty large importance after all. There is no doubt whatever that the Minister of Marine and Fisheries made the speech that has been read to-night. The speech was reported word for word verbatim by Mr. Haines who was then my private secretary. It was reported for 'La Patrie' and 'La Presse' at the same time.

Mr. HUGHES (Victoria). By different reporters.

Hon. Mr. TARTE. No, by the same man.

Some hon. MEMBERS. Oh.

Mr. HUGHES (Victoria). They both must be right then.

Hon. Mr. TARTE. There is no doubt whatever that the report is altogether correct, word for word. It was stenographed in the ordinary way. I had taken charge of