

bility for a Committee; but I never had any doubt about the wisdom of what we did, and I have no doubt now. There was certainly no sinister object in what we did; we were going as far as we could to get at the heart of the railway situation.

Hon. Mr. BELCOURT: I am not going to repeat what my honourable friend has said, because as a member of that Committee I agree with every word of his; but I think that every member of the Committee must feel that if we had not sat in camera we would not have obtained half the information we got. I think that fact amply justifies our attitude.

Right Hon. Sir GEORGE E. FOSTER: It was the only possible way.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: I am glad that the Chairman of the Committee, our esteemed friend from Middleton (Hon. W. B. Ross) has drawn the attention of the Senate to a statement in the other House which was made in order that it might reach this House. A prominent member of the other House wanted to know why the evidence given before our Railway Committee was not forthcoming, and he thought that it should be produced. His remarks closed with the words: "I hope my words will reach the Senate." He said also:

I observe that the Senate Committee which is supposed to be making this report, the origin of which would be interesting, met in secret.

Of course, I do not know exactly what is implied in the expression; "the origin of which would be interesting." I am quite sure that the Debates of the Senate at the time the matter was initiated will show from what source it came.

It is perhaps a matter of indifference to the public even to know the names of the gentlemen who appeared before the Committee. They were men of considerable importance in the community, the best we could find in experience and qualifications. The Committee invited those gentlemen for the purpose of obtaining enlightenment on this formidable problem, and, after hearing the various suggestions made for its solution, the Committee were unanimous as to the one that appealed most strongly to their judgment.

We submitted our conclusion for what it is worth, and no one need go into the genesis of that conclusion. We felt that it was the best solution that had been submitted. No one in the Committee claims infallibility, and if any better scheme from any source is presented to the country it will be welcomed. If the Senate at its next Session finds that a better solution of the problem has been

proposed, there is no doubt that it will say so, as we have no pride in regard to the recommendation we make, but we have a oneness of purpose, which is to find the solution that will appeal to the general public and to the sober-minded men of this country.

What I said more than once in the Committee I desire to repeat now, so that members of the other House may read it, that there is in Great Britain a Committee which meets to consider matters of national importance, where party passions and conflicts do not enter: it is the Committee on National Defence. I understand that that Committee is composed of the leaders of all parties in the British House of Commons. They meet together so that they may bear joint responsibility for the defence of the realm, and in order that there may be continuity in the policy of the British Government on that subject. I believe that that Committee is based on the highest and best view of what can be regarded as real patriotism.

I suggested that the solution of our railway problem was of vital importance to this country, in view of the \$50,000,000 or \$100,000,000 deficit per year, which may increase in weight upon our shoulders. I need not stress that point, but I added in more than one form the remark that this problem was equivalent to that of national defence in Great Britain, and I believe that it was of such vital importance that if there was one question in Canada on which the leaders of the three parties could join hands and work together in a friendly and patriotic way, around the same table, in an endeavor to rescue the country from its difficulties, this railway problem was that question.

Hon. Sir JAMES LOUGHEED: All I can say is that in my opinion the Senate should be the best judge as to how it should conduct its own business.

DOMINION ELECTIONS BILL

FIRST READING

Bill 148, an Act to amend the Dominion Elections Act.—Hon. Mr. Dandurand.

SECOND READING

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND moved the second reading of the Bill.

He said: This is a Bill that especially concerns the House of Commons. It deals with elections and the mode of holding them. It contains quite a number of sections.

Right Hon. Sir GEORGE E. FOSTER: Is the Bill distributed?