

be set up. I wish to make it clear to the minister that I have deliberately refrained to-night from arguing the merits of the dispute between the men and the company because I do not want the minister in his reply to spend too much time on that. The issue now is whether or not the government is going to carry out the recommendation made by Mr. Johnstone. There it is. It comes from a conciliation officer in the Department of Labour. During the time when I was trying to get the minister to table that report, during the months when he was unwilling to do so, one of the arguments he used for refusing to table this document was that, in order to get civil servants such as Mr. Johnstone to prepare an authoritative and useful report and really give all the information that was desired, it was necessary to guarantee to such a civil servant that his report would be treated as confidential. Well, that cuts both ways. It means that since the minister did not want to table the report—

Mr. MITCHELL: If my hon. friend wants, I will answer that in a moment. He is treading on dangerous ground. I will give the answer in two minutes if he is not careful.

Mr. KNOWLES: Never mind the threats. I am simply trying to show the minister that on the basis of his own argument this report is an excellent one. It is one that was prepared under the most favourable circumstances for the preparation of a good report; and there it is, obviously complete in its survey, because the arguments are there from both sides. But the upshot of the whole investigation is a clear-cut recommendation that the commission should be established. Against that is the objection of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company. I submit that the objection of the Canadian Pacific is itself offset by the request of the men, and the impartial viewpoint of the whole matter is that of Mr. Johnstone in his recommendation to the minister. The question I now put to the minister, and the question which is coming to me from the unions of the men represented, is whether or not we may expect the government to carry out the recommendation which was made in Mr. Johnstone's report for establishing a royal commission with terms of reference such as those suggested in this official document.

Mr. MITCHELL: The answer to my hon. friend is contained in the following reply:

The matter is being given consideration by the law officers of the crown and the decision has been reached that the appointment of a royal commission would serve no useful purpose.

That is the answer.

Mr. MAYBANK: Mr. Chairman—

Mr. LENNARD: Surely we are not going to be here all night.

Mr. MAYBANK: No one is going to be here all night because of the very few minutes that I am going to take. This subject is one in which I have been interested for a number of years. I should like to have seen some further inquiry into it, and I have been working to that end for some time. Just before the Prime Minister left here for the peace conference, I had with him, I was going to say a rather lengthy interview, but an interview at all events, together with the vice-president of the brotherhood of railway trainmen, on this subject, with a view to asking his consideration of the matter on his return. There the matter at that time stood. I have often thought that much might be said on the subject, but on the other hand I felt that situations are sometimes not aided by too much speech. I think, however, it is only right that I should put on the record the fact of this interview and the sympathetic hearing given by the Prime Minister at that time. I know, of course, that when he comes back there will be the utmost further consideration given to it that can be given. I just wanted the committee to be made aware of those facts.

Mr. KNOWLES: I should like to confirm what the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre has just said about the sympathetic ear given by the Prime Minister to appeals in connection with this matter. The Prime Minister gave me an interview similar to the one referred to by the hon. member, and likewise made it clear that the door would not be closed in connection with this matter. I may also confirm what the hon. member has just said about the vice-president of his own organization, the brotherhood of railway trainmen. He told me of the sympathetic hearing that was given when he saw the Prime Minister just before the Prime Minister left for overseas. That is good, but the men concerned want more than sympathy; they want action; they want their pensions.

Mr. LENNARD: Mr. Chairman, we agreed to hear the hon. member out. We sat here and gave him a good hearing. But we do not want another 40-minute speech piled on top of that.

Mr. KNOWLES: It is immaterial to me whether it is done to-night or to-morrow morning.

Mr. LENNARD: You said you wanted a few minutes.