

scendants, if any, might have a legal claim to the Throne, and that, there being no precedent for what has happened, it was necessary to pass this legislation. But, even assuming that what the Minister said is correct, I cannot see anything in the Statute of Westminster requiring us to pass any legislation at all. How are we going to express our assent?

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: I am not certain that I apprehend correctly the question asked by the honourable senator. I know the Minister of Justice has said that the reason for the British statute was, notwithstanding the abdication and the undoubted power of the monarch to abdicate, to make assurance doubly sure that his descendants could not make any claim to the Throne, nor could he himself if he should want to do so in later years. I am ready to agree that that was probably in the minds of the British Government and Parliament, and therefore they passed their statute and declared the abdication, which took effect upon the monarch's assent to the statute, to be a demise of the Crown. When that statute became effective the Act of Settlement came into play and made the present King George VI monarch of our Empire. The demise of the Crown was complete immediately on assent to the statute, without any doubt in the world, and it was complete for the whole Empire.

Hon. Mr. LYNCH-STAUTON: I agree with everything the right honourable gentleman has said, but there is a point I should like to ask as a matter of curiosity. Assuming that cause did arise for action to be taken respecting succession to the Throne, we are not required by the Statute of Westminster to enact any legislation. How are we to express our assent?

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: I should think the proper way would be by resolution of both Houses of Parliament.

Hon. Mr. LEGER: In view of what has been said, would it not be better to amend the title by striking out the words "respecting alteration in" and substituting therefor the word "confirming," so that the title would read: "An Act confirming the law touching the succession to the Throne"?

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: I think the present title is quite incorrect, but I wonder if it would be any improvement to make the suggested change. I point out to the honourable senator that we are not confirming the law either.

Hon. Mr. LEGER: The change I suggested would not make the title exactly correct, but would bring it nearer to accuracy than it now is.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: I should not like to suggest any change that would require an amendment to the Bill, for then we should run into a conflict with the other House, and I do not want that. My intention was simply to express my own view and let it go at that. I feel sure, because of the strong stand taken by the Prime Minister, that if we changed the Bill we should have a conflict with the other House.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: If no other honourable member desires to speak I will close the debate. I would simply answer the objection of my right honourable friend in this way. The Statute of Westminster is an Imperial Act. Surely the Parliament which enacted that statute, or the Ministers who sponsored it, must have had some understanding of the end they had in view. And what do we find? The British Government, at the time it was presenting its Declaration of Abdication Bill, was cabling to the various Dominions asking them to assent.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: It is quite right that the Dominions should be consulted and their views expressed, for this matter affects us all. But that does not mean the Parliament of Canada needs to pass a statute at the present time.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: That is not the view that has been expressed by the British Government and its law officers.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: I should like to see the view of law officers of the British Government. Can the honourable gentleman produce it? I should prize it as a sweet morsel.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: I am simply judging the attitude of the British Government and its law officers by the result. The British Government asked the Dominions for their opinion, as is stated in the preamble to the British Act.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: I intended to call attention to that Act, and I will do so now. It appears as a schedule to our Bill, and one finds upon reading it that there is no provision at all for a change in the law of succession. That is not suggested. On the contrary, the Act says there is a demise of the Crown and that therefore the law as to succession comes into effect. That Act is well done. Look at the way it reads: