

operated at a loss of about one hundred million dollars a year. Surely this House, which is an independent body, owes it to the country to assert its power and to do its duty. For my part, I will not hesitate in voting in favour of the motion which has just been made.

Hon. Mr. BELCOURT: Honourable gentlemen, I am going to speak but two words. I want to join with my honourable friend in his appeal for the withdrawal of the Bill.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: I need not apologize to the House when I state that I have been unable to give very much time to the study of this Bill. I have never before seen a Session so fruitful of legislation from the other House during the last two months.

Hon. Mr. BELCOURT: And so late.

Hon. Mr. ROBERTSON: 41 Bills in two weeks.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: I have simply glanced at the Bill. There is only one thing that disturbs me. When I look through the list of railway undertakings, I find that between \$9,000,000 and \$10,000,000 of the money of the Canadian people have been sunk into these branches up to the moment.

Hon. Mr. FOWLER: Would you sink \$90,000,000 more?

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: I therefore ask myself if there is not a pressing need in some cases to proceed with the work in order to save the millions that have already been expended in places where the finished work would be an asset to the country.

Hon. Sir JAMES LOUGHEED: May I point out this fact to my honourable friend? In the Estimates there is an item of \$73,000,000 which has been voted the Canadian National Railways for betterments and other purposes. If there is any pressing need between now and the next Session of Parliament, surely my honourable friend can have his Government dip into that \$73,000,000 as freely as the President of the Canadian National Railways dipped into the Exchequer a short time ago to buy an hotel in Paris. If the necessities of building branch railways be equally great, there is no reason why some of this \$73,000,000 should not be made available for that purpose.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: I realize that the Senate has up to this moment received very little information as to the necessity of proceeding with any of these works. When I rose a moment ago it was to say that there

Hon. Mr. BEIQUE

was a sufficient knowledge in this Chamber of the needs of the various regions covered by this Bill to enable us to go into Committee and to examine into the necessities of all of these branches and pass upon them in sober judgment.

Hon. Mr. ROBERTSON: Does my honourable friend suggest that we should go into Committee of the Whole on this Bill, and that it should not be referred to and investigated by the Committee on Railways, Telegraphs and Harbours?

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: I realize that this Bill comes to us very late in the Session.

Hon. Sir JAMES LOUGHEED: And would my honourable friend consider this phase of it that the most objectionable feature of the whole transaction is the character of the Bill itself?

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: There again I would tell my honourable friend that we are here to put our stamp on a Bill when it comes to us. I will not stop to discuss the drafting of this Bill; when we have it in our hands we are masters of the Bill; and if it went to Committee it would be part of our duty not only to scrutinize the occasion for building each and every one of these lines but to see whether or not the Bill could be amended.

However, in view of the general expression of opinion that this is too important a matter for us to grapple with at this moment of the Session, I will ask that the debate be adjourned until to-morrow so that I may have an opportunity of consulting with my colleagues. I may say that in this we have perhaps an object lesson on Government ownership. We have promised a free hand to the Railway Board.

Hon. Mr. FOWLER: Not too free.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: And we have repeated that we would give them a free hand.

Hon. Mr. ROBERTSON: To operate, not to construct.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: —and a fair trial. We are confronted with a proposition of some magnitude, and I am not ready to say that it is without merit even in one instance, because I have not the direct knowledge. I was relying upon the members in each locality to help us to pass judgment. I did intend to duly weigh their opinions; but, after hearing the protests that have been expressed, I will move the adjournment of the debate.

Hon. Mr. BEIQUE: I hope Parliament is not committed to the Board of Directors