

the national railways or their present subsidiaries or component parts operated by the management. If one were to wipe that off, it would clear the picture, but at the same time it would not improve the capital position. I have under my hand a letter which Sir Henry Thornton wrote me a year ago and which I intend to put on Hansard in order to save time. I shall read just a couple of sentences. We had discussed this question a number of times and I asked his opinion in regard to it. He wrote me as follows:

With reference to the revision of our financial structure which has been under contemplation for a long time: I feel it would be an unwise thing to present it to parliament this session because the present depression and state of the company's finances necessitate an entire review of our previous recommendations.

He gives other reasons and then he closes the letter as follows:

For all of these reasons I think it inadvisable to bring this very complicated question before the next session of parliament.

That was written a year ago, referring to last session. Since that time Sir Henry Thornton has not given me any other opinion than that, and I have no reason to think he would suggest at the present time that this should be wiped out. That is a matter of opinion which can be decided when the whole matter of the report of the Royal Commission on Railways and Transportation is made to parliament.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I do not wish to interrupt my hon. friend, but is this some new method he is adopting of placing documents on Hansard? I have noticed he has handed two or three sheets to the Hansard reporter.

Mr. MANION: I explained my intention. My right hon. friend has done the same thing for many years, and there is nothing wrong about it. It has always been the privilege of a minister when he is making a statement to the house, instead of reading a lengthy document, to place it on Hansard. I said a moment ago that I was going to place this letter of Sir Henry Thornton on Hansard. I thought I would save the time of the house by doing so without reading the whole of it.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: My hon. friend forgets that this can be done only by consent of the house. He has not asked for consent. I hope now that we have concluded the discussion on unemployment relief, we may get back to some consideration for the commons.

[Mr. Manion.]

Mr. MANION: May I tell my right hon. friend I sincerely hope we can, and hon. gentlemen opposite need the lesson much more than we do on this side.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: If my hon. friend wants the consent of the house, he had better ask for it.

Mr. SPEAKER: There seems to be some misunderstanding. Documents are put on Hansard only if read in the house, except by consent, as the leader of the opposition has said. It has been the custom, when the budget is brought down, for the Minister of Finance to put on Hansard certain financial statements, schedules or tables, without reading them in full,—

Mr. MANION: It has been the custom.

Mr. SPEAKER: —by consent.

Mr. MANION: It has been the custom for ministers to do so, certainly by consent; but I took it for granted that my right hon. friend would not object. If he objects, I shall read the whole letter.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Let the hon. gentleman ask for the consent of the house. That is all.

Mr. LAPOINTE: Ministers usually ask for leave of the house.

Mr. MANION: I am sorry I have hurt the susceptibilities of the leader of the opposition, and if he will permit me I shall place the letter on Hansard.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Hear, hear.

Mr. MANION: The letter is as follows:

Montreal, Quebec,

February 20, 1931.

Dear Doctor,—

With reference to the revision of our financial structure which has been under contemplation for a long time: I feel it would be an unwise thing to present it to parliament this session because the present depression and state of the company's finances necessitate an entire review of our previous recommendations. Furthermore, the outlook for the future is, at the moment, so uncertain that it is almost impossible to make any precise prognostications.

I imagine the next session will be a very busy one with unemployment, tariffs, government finances and highly contentious questions that there will not be sufficient time to consider in a mature way so important a question as the revision of our financial structure. Also, our own directors are quite unfamiliar with our very complicated financial problem. It will take them some time to become acquainted with it, and I cannot present for your consideration any proposals until our directors have had an opportunity of forming their own conclusions.