

the whole situation. But we have no information from the minister touching one of the largest problems before parliament this session. After a minister has introduced a bill which has received its first reading the house has a right, when it is moved that the bill be read the second time, to expect a statement regarding the whole matter; hon. members are entitled to some information for their enlightenment. Now I should like to have this information before the second reading takes place, and I do not think I am asking anything unreasonable from the Postmaster General. Here we are confronted with a short bill of two clauses and are given not a word of explanation. This is important legislation, and at least we should have information in the form of an appendix. The matter has been before the house on and off for some weeks, but as yet we are completely in the dark regarding the whole transaction.

There is also in this correspondence a letter dated December 22, in the nature of a Pacific cable policy. Immediately after this was despatched the whole question was completely changed, and the terms of reference to the committee, as shown in the report of 1928, are altogether different from those indicated in the correspondence tabled in the house on May 2. In this report the terms of reference are:

We were appointed:—

To examine the situation which has arisen as a result of the competition of the beam wireless with the cable services, to report thereon and to make recommendations with a view to a common policy being adopted by the various governments concerned.

We know now what that common policy was; it was a policy to take the government-owned beam system, which was paying, and the government-owned Pacific cable system, which was also paying its way, and hand them over to a private corporation. We find further that certain memoranda were submitted to the conference—on behalf of whom? Nothing was submitted by the Dominion government at all, and in fact there is nothing in the report submitted to the house which shows what was recommended by the Canadian government. We only know that the report is signed on behalf of the Dominion government, and possibly the Postmaster General may be able to give us further information before the bill is finally put through. Apparently they were in such indecent haste to get through with this conference that although the Australian representative was on his way to London the investigating committee, including a Canadian representative, refused to wait until he arrived and had an

opportunity to present his views. Apparently there is some reason why we cannot get all this correspondence tabled here; there is some reason for all this secrecy. Is it because the whole transaction cannot bear the light of day? I am just beginning to wonder whether or not that is the reason.

On page 7 of the report I find the following:

On the 25th October, 1926, the Anglo-Canadian beam service was opened, the operation being undertaken in Great Britain by the Post Office and in Canada by the Canadian Marconi Company. The rates remained the same by cable and by wireless. The long-wave service previously operated in Great Britain by the Marconi Company was terminated on the same date.

Here is a rather interesting feature in connection with this submission. In all other countries in which the beam wireless service was in operation there was a reduction in rates by one third; that is, the rates to Australia were reduced from two shillings six pence to one shilling eight pence by beam wireless; the rates to South Africa were reduced from 2 shillings to one shilling four pence and the rates to India were reduced from one shilling eight pence to one shilling one pence. Canada was the only country having beam wireless communication where no reduction was made as a result of that service. What was the reason? It was because the government of this country, or one of the departments of the government, handed over the operation of this beam wireless service to the Canadian Marconi Company, a private corporation, although there was no reason why the Post Office Department or the Department of Marine and Fisheries should not have controlled that service in Canada. Perhaps it would be interesting, Mr. Speaker, if I quoted section 18 of the report which is as follows:

Before the opening of the beam services, the cables were working with a large margin of annual surplus, and there is evidence that the introduction of cheaper rates has already led to an appreciable increase in the total volume of telegraph traffic. But in spite of this it has been represented to us that the cable undertakings affected by the wireless rate reductions and the Indo-European land-line service have been brought to a serious position by the two-fold reduction in their receipts resulting from the operation of the lower rates introduced as a means of countering beam competition and also from the loss of a considerable volume of traffic to the beam services. It should, however, be observed with regard to the Canadian service, where wireless and cable rates are the same, that no crisis has at present arisen.

This report, which was signed by all the representatives at that conference, stated that no crisis had arisen in regard to the service,