

RELIEF BILL

FIRST READING

A message was received from the House of Commons with Bill 42, an Act respecting Relief Measures.

The Bill was read the first time.

The Hon. the SPEAKER: When shall this Bill be read the second time?

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: I should like the Bill to be read the second time today, but I will not ask the House to go into Committee until to-morrow.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: Then perhaps my right honourable friend would be agreeable to the second reading being moved to-morrow? That would give us time to look over the Bill. We have heard of it before, but I confess that I have not read it.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: All right.

DIVORCE BILLS

FIRST READINGS

Hon. Mr. McMEANS, Chairman of the Committee on Divorce, presented the following Bills, which were severally read the first time:

Bill N, an Act for the relief of Archibald Bruce Elliott Smart.

Bill O, an Act for the relief of Lilac Violet Grumbell Reid.

Bill P, an Act for the relief of Lily Archer Watson.

Bill Q, an Act for the relief of Annie Isabel Tinning Meldrum.

Bill R, an Act for the relief of Lois Theresa Malcolm.

PRIVATE BILL

THIRD READING

Bill 11, an Act respecting Prudential Trust Company, Limited.—Hon. Mr. Beaubien.

TRANSCONTINENTAL RAILWAY—
CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY
AGREEMENT BILL

MOTION FOR THIRD READING

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN moved the third reading of Bill 25, an Act to ratify and confirm an agreement respecting the joint use by His Majesty and the Commissioners of the Transcontinental Railway of certain tracks and premises of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company at Quebec.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND.

Hon. G. PARENT: Honourable members, when this Bill came before the Standing Committee on Railways, Telegraphs and Harbours, of which I am a member, I asked for certain information from officials of the Canadian National Railways. Since that time I have been away, and I understand that during my absence someone appeared before the Committee and stated that the city of Quebec, the Canadian National Railway, His Majesty the King, and the Canadian Pacific Railway had no objection to the provisions of this Bill. In the circumstances I wish to make a few observations. In the first place, I do not see any necessity for this measure. If the Canadian National Railways and the Canadian Pacific Railway were able to conclude a certain agreement without any legislation by Parliament in 1914, there is no reason why they cannot do the same thing to-day. In 1930 certain changes were made in that agreement, and still it was not thought necessary to have a law passed on that account.

I submit to this honourable House that before we pass this Bill we should know more than we know to-day about the things that were done in 1914 and 1930. The first party mentioned in the Bill is the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, the second is His Majesty the King, and the third is the Canadian National Railways, or in other words the Canadian people. For some time now steps have been taken with a view to developing co-operation between our two great railways, and I think it would be a mistake to put on the Statute Book of Canada a law confirming a contract affecting those railways for 99 years, when the people of Canada do not know what the contract is about. The contract affects property rights, and I ask the right honourable leader of the House if it has ever been registered—if the agreement has ever been known in the communities concerned. In my opinion we should not pass the Bill until we are given further information, and I therefore move, in amendment, that the Bill be not now read a third time, but this day six months.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: Honourable members, one is never finished with surprises in the long journey of life. I had no notion that there was even any difference of opinion over this measure, but, as there is, I think that the discussion should be adjourned until the Chairman of the Railway Committee is present. I presume he will be here to-mor-

row, and I am sure he will be able to answer the honourable gentleman's questions better than I can.

I had thought that the brief explanation I gave of the measure on second reading was sufficient. Seemingly the only new point raised by the honourable gentleman is that there has not been any registration of the agreement which it is now proposed to ratify. I think the people of Canada know, and always have known, that any agreement with His Majesty the King in relation to railways is necessarily a part of the record of the Department of Railways and Canals of Canada, and that a copy of it can be obtained there. I do not know of any other registration that would be more available for search than one such as that.

However, as I have already suggested, I think that it would be better that I did not attempt to answer the honourable gentleman's questions and that we postponed the motion for third reading until the Chairman of the Committee on Railways is present.

Hon. Mr. PARENT: The right honourable gentleman has been a member of the House of Commons, and he knows that anyone who requested information concerning the National Railways was always told that it was impossible to get any.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: That must have been during the period of 1921 to 1926. I cannot dispute the statement of the honourable gentleman in that respect.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: I think that from 1921 to 1926 there was a special committee of the House of Commons appointed to look after matters concerning the Canadian National Railways.

Right Hon. Mr. MEIGHEN: And before that time we did not have the railways.

Hon. Mr. LACASSE: It is a chronological case.

The Senate adjourned until to-morrow at 3 p.m.