

say this, that as far as I am concerned, and as far as the government is concerned, the fullest possible scope will be given. There is no idea of limiting the thing in any way, shape or form; but it is due these officials, I think that some intimation should be made in order, as I say, that they may know exactly the atmosphere in which they are placed. My own suggestion, if I may put it, would be that—

Mr. CAHAN: The honourable gentleman was not here the other day, when the concensus of the committee certainly was that we should ask the officials of the department to give us a general word picture of the organization, work and operation of the department; to state what their difficulties were so far as they found them, and to put before us a general picture of the work of immigration in all its important ramifications, and then if anyone wants to bring up later any particular matter or grievance why there would be ample opportunity to do so. But we, who are members of this committee representing the side of the House which I represent, wish to face it as a great national matter and avoid, as far as we can, the discussion of immaterial and incidental matters. I think the general concensus of everyone was that we should ask the officials to give a broad outline of their work and operation, and that after we had heard that, after the agreements and contracts had been brought down, after the instructions which were outstanding to immigration agents were brought down, then we would be able, perhaps, to proceed with a more definite agenda. But we are dealing with a national problem now. We hope to deal with it as such, and we hope to avoid anything petty. We wish to know the immigration agencies, the agreements with the railways, with the immigration associations, if there are any agreements outstanding; we wish to have a general outline of the whole system, and, after that, we can resolve upon some definite agenda.

Hon. Mr. RALSTON: My honourable friend did not quite catch me. What I had in mind was whether the officials could come here feeling that they would sit in a round table conference in order to give information.

Mr. CAHAN: That is what we wish.

Hon. Mr. RALSTON: Not under suspicion of bad faith.

Mr. CAHAN: I have never heard any suggestion of that.

Hon. Mr. RALSTON: There has been something said in the press.

Mr. CAHAN: We have no such desire.

Hon. Mr. EDWARDS: Mr. Chairman, I do not know whether I gathered the purport of what the Honourable Minister of National Defence intended to convey, but it strikes me that the first thing to do is to lay a foundation, as was suggested at the last meeting, to get the instructions given to the various agents of the government in whatever countries they are in. We are not in a position to estimate whether they are doing the work until we know what their instructions are, and what are the contracts with transportation companies and with various organizations engaged in immigration work. I think we can get that this morning from the deputy minister who is here. First of all, we want this general information. The officers of the department are officers of this country. We will co-operate with them, of course, and we will expect their co-operation in bringing out all the information that we can possibly get in regard to immigration work. But it seems to me that as officers of the department, it is inevitable that they should submit to questions which perhaps will look to them critical. It is not the idea of this committee, I take it, to put anybody on the rack; the idea is to get information. There should be no limit whatever to what any person on this committee may see fit to ask of the officials of the department. They are officials of the Dominion of Canada, and must give all the information required of them, and I assume, to start with, that they will be willing to do so, no matter how critical it may be.