

earnings may be insufficient) to meet expenditures made or indebtedness incurred at any time by or on behalf of the Canadian Northern Railway Company, the Canadian National Railway Company, or any company comprised in the Canadian Northern Railway System.

In 1919, on June 6, an Act was passed, subject, however, to coming into force by Order in Council, for the purpose of bringing all the Government railways under Dominion Government control under the provisions of that Act, and those provisions were to the effect that these Government railways were to be subject to the Board of Railway Commissioners, and to the provisions of the general Railway Act. Now either one of two things is true: either the Canadian National Railway Company exists, or it does not exist. If it exists, we have a right to discuss anything that comes within the purview of the Government railways which are to be included in that company. Of course, there is a restriction in the Act; the Governor in Council reserves to himself the power to designate what railways shall form part of the Canadian National Railway Company, but ordinary common-sense, even good horse sense, would make us presume that every railway under government control would form part of the Canadian National Railway Company. Now if this company does not exist, the minister has no right to ask us to vote this money for a company which is not in existence—for railways which are supposed to exist and be operated under a law which is not in force. This Act I speak of was passed under closure. I remember the circumstances distinctly, because there were certain disagreeable remarks addressed to me at that time. I say that the present situation as to the existence or non-existence of this company works an injustice to the public, and I will give you a concrete case.

In January of 1920 I filed a petition of right for \$180,000 odd for a client of mine, the Belgo-Canadian Pulp and Paper Company. I also filed a similar claim, although the amount was not quite so large, for the Laurentide Company, for damage caused by the National Transcontinental operating north in the St. Maurice region. Those petitions of right are still in the hands of the Government, and all we got was an acknowledgment of receipt. In the meantime dams were destroyed by the Transcontinental, resulting in damage to property to the amount of \$183,000, and we had to reconstruct them in a hurry to save the lumber coming down the St.

Maurice river. One of the dams caused a jam of logs, and this jam of logs caused an erosion of the shore. Our petition of right filed in January, 1920, has been ignored, and in the meantime the Government has taken action against my clients for erosion, for a similar amount. I say that is a shame. Either this company exists or it does not exist. If it exists, I have the right to go before the ordinary tribunal. If it does not exist, I do not have that right, and I have to ask for a petition of right. Personally, I do not feel like voting money when the minister comes before Parliament and asks for a vote for the National Railway Company which is not in existence. We ought to know the exact status of that Canadian National Railway Company—what it hides, or what it covers. If we are going to vote money for the Canadian National Railway Company, why not pass the Order in Council and bring the Act into force? Why abuse the power vested in the Government? As the result of this negligence on the part of the Government, we have cases such as I have just cited. For my part, I do not feel ready to vote for this item under the circumstances.

Hon. Mr. REID: This vote is for the Canadian Northern Railway system.

Mr. BUREAU: Then strike out the Canadian National Railway Company.

Hon. Mr. REID: The Bill that the hon. member refers to was passed for the purpose of bringing all the Government railways under one corporation. At that time negotiations were going on with the Grand Trunk, which it was expected on completion would lead to its transfer to the Canadian National Railway system. The Intercolonial and the Transcontinental would also come into the one system. The Act was to be brought into force by Order in Council. That was the intention when we got the Grand Trunk.

Mr. BUREAU: There was no question of the Grand Trunk at that time?

Hon. Mr. REID: That was the intention when the Act was passed, but the negotiations fell through.

Mr. BUREAU: It must have been a pretty silent intention.

Hon. Mr. REID: Since then the management of the Canadian Northern have been appointed, and later, by Order in Council, a Board of Management was appointed to manage the Canadian National and the Canadian Northern.