

passed in that year. All new employees on the government railways must come under the new Pension Act and they can no longer be considered as eligible under the old provident fund. They are empowered to make certain rules and regulations, and such rules and regulations have been drawn up governing the administration of that pension fund. I have here a copy of the rules and regulations and it is provided that a man laid off, if he has not been fifteen years in the service, having reached the age of fifty, cannot get compensation. He may get it, but it is not absolute. It is only permissive, depending on the decision of the board and backed by the approval of the minister. A man who has been in the service of the railroad for a shorter term and is laid off because of changes contemplated, we will say by this bill, has absolutely no guarantee that he will benefit from the amount he has paid into the pension fund. For instance, if he is under fifty years of age and has had less than fifteen years of service, under these regulations there would be no guarantee that he would benefit. Under the regulations, the rule of seniority applies in the contracts between the railway and the men. For instance, if I have been fifteen years in the service and my colleague has been only twelve years, he would be laid off if there was a necessity to lay off a man. Take another case: if I am employed, say on section 50 of the Intercolonial and it is found necessary to drop a man from that section, if there is another man employed on another section who is junior to me in service, he will be laid off and I will be transferred to that section. Under the act of 1929 there is no guarantee given to a man that he will enjoy the benefits of the amounts he has paid into the pension fund. The railway commission knew that if their recommendations were accepted the railways would lay off many men and they should have seen that those men were protected. They should have examined the regulation governing pensions; they should have examined the pension act of 1929 and if necessary, called in an experienced railway man to give them any required information. They failed to do that and that is why I contend that this bill should be sent to a special committee so that complete details could be obtained and the necessary protection afforded to these men. The minister should study the regulations in conjunction with the act of 1929, and he should study also the bill now before the committee in conjunction with that act and in conjunction with the regulations. A clause

should be placed in this bill so that the men would not have to be dependent upon the whims of the board of trustees as to whether they were entitled to compensation.

Mr. MANION: The deputy minister has handed me a copy of The Intercolonial and Prince Edward Island Railways Employees' Provident Fund Act. Clause 19 reads as follows:

Employees who are discharged from the service for any cause other than those mentioned in paragraph (b) of section 17, after they have been three or more years contributors to the fund, may be paid out of the fund the total amount of their contributions to the fund, but without interest and less the cost and expense of medical examinations.

I do not think that clause agrees with what the hon. gentleman has said.

Mr. VENIOT: If that act were in existence to-day, then I would admit I was wrong, but it was superseded by the pension act of 1929. That act brings the Intercolonial, the Prince Edward Island road and the ferry service under its provisions. Any person employed from that time on would come under the provisions of the act.

Mr. MANION: My deputy insists that this is still the law.

Mr. VENIOT: Then I differ from him; I am right and he is wrong. A list is given of the railroads that are to come under these very regulations, and that list includes the Intercolonial and all branch lines which are purchased by the government. I would advise the deputy to study this thing very carefully before giving a legal opinion. I maintain I am right but I hope I am wrong.

Mr. CHAPLIN: You are.

Mr. VENIOT: If I am wrong, the men will be protected.

Mr. MANION: I have no desire to attempt to show that the hon. gentleman is wrong, but I am sure that he has no desire to give the committee any inaccurate information. My deputy informs me that where a man joined the service since 1929 he would not be contributing to the pension fund.

Mr. VENIOT: If the minister had followed me closely he would have seen that I agreed in part with that statement. I was referring more particularly to those men who have had only a few years of service on the road, to men who have come in since 1929.

Mr. MANION: They do not contribute anything.