

To provide for the expenses of the Conservation Commission, \$80,000.

Mr. PUGSLEY: Is it expected to expend the whole of this money?

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: Yes, I understand it is necessary to expend the whole amount. The hon. gentleman will observe that there is a reduction in the Estimate this year of \$13,000.

Mr. PUGSLEY: It seems to be a large amount to be spent in one year. Perhaps the Prime Minister would give us some items of the expenditure of last year.

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: They are all in the Auditor General's Report.

Mr. PUGSLEY: Then I need not trouble the right hon. gentleman.

Mr. OLIVER: I desire to ask a question in regard to the authority of this commission. An order has been issued to compel the Canadian Pacific Railway and the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway to use crude petroleum for firing on their locomotives in British Columbia. Is that order issued under the authority of the Conservation Commission or is it by the Government on the advice of that commission?

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: The Conservation Commission have taken a great interest in preventing forest fires caused by sparks from locomotives. They make representations to the Board of Railway Commissioners and the Board of Railway Commissioners issue the orders. If I am not mistaken there was an arrangement between the Board of Railway Commissioners and the Conservation Commission to bear jointly the expense of some investigation on that subject. I have not the details clear in my mind, but I remember that I have conferred with the chairman of these commissions and the Minister of Railways and Canals on the subject.

Mr. OLIVER: Recently the Canadian Northern railway has opened a line across British Columbia. Will it be compelled to install oil-burning appliances on its locomotives also?

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: I could not give an answer off hand, but I shall make inquiries and let the hon. gentleman know. These matters do not ordinarily come before me, but sometimes I have a representation from one or other of these bodies asking me to take some action, or to give particular attention to some subject that is regarded as urgent.

Mr. OLIVER: It would be an anomaly, of course, if the Canadian Pacific railway and the Grand Trunk Pacific railway are compelled to use oil and the Canadian Northern is not so compelled, because for some considerable distance west of the summit of the Rockies the Grand Trunk Pacific and the Canadian Northern run alongside each other within a few yards. But I take this opportunity to say that this order of the Railway Commission, even if based on the recommendation of the Conservation Commission, does not enjoy any large measure of favour in the minds of the people of Alberta, where they have a superabundance of coal which they are anxious to have used. The fact is that this order has been a stunning blow to the coal-mining industry of Alberta. It appears to me that the order was given, perhaps, with hardly a full appreciation of the industrial consequences to result from the importation of California oil to take the place, as a motive power, of Alberta coal. And while it is necessary, of course, that the forests should be conserved from fire, it does seem to me that some other means of protecting the forest from fire from locomotives might surely have been discovered by the Conservation Commission rather than a means which transfers such an important part of the industry of Alberta to the oil fields of Southern California.

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: I will direct the attention of the Board of Railway Commissioners to the observations of my hon. friend. In stating what I have stated about it, I speak, not so much from personal knowledge as from a recollection of the fact that the Conservation commission drew my attention to the matter. I am not sure of the representations they made, but I know that they were greatly interested in the subject.

Mr. GRAHAM: I am not sure that the Board of Railway Commissioners made that order; I am not sure they did not, although I have some doubt about it.

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: I was only suggesting that if the order was made I feel quite sure the Conservation Commission did not make it, because that commission would have no jurisdiction.

Mr. GRAHAM: Some years ago, when the question of better protection of the forest. Not only along railways in operation but along lines of construction, was under discussion, shortly after the formation of the