

bridge where this hospital was. Our information is to the effect that after they left the place where they were working, they were taken from the van and put into a car.

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER. They were placed in a box car.

The SOLICITOR GENERAL. They started out in a van and came part of the way in a van, and then they were removed into an open wagon, and were brought in that open wagon down to Pincher Creek, where they were taken from the open wagon and put in a box car. These are the facts as they really occurred. Now, it is impossible to conceive, on the face of it, more cruel treatment than this. At the same time you have to realize that from the time they left the mountains until they reached Pincher Creek, where they were placed in a box car, they were amongst labourers who were afraid that these men would communicate the disease to them. The fact is that from the time the men first started they were left without any care or attendance whatever until they reached this box car at Pincher Creek, and this was in the month of December or January. When they came into the box car they were there for about two hours before they died, Dr. Mead being in attendance. Now, on these facts, which I do not mitigate, for which I offer no excuse, I ask hon. gentlemen opposite to indicate the course they would follow. What are we going to do about it? Where is the criminal proceeding to be adopted? Where is the criminal remedy which they can indicate to us? We sought for it at the time, not only sought for it, but instructed our agent in the locality to make full inquiries into the matter.

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER. Did not Mr. Coneybeare indicate a course?

The SOLICITOR GENERAL. No. I have here the report of Mr. Coneybeare, dated the 24th of February, which I am willing to give to my hon. friend.

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER. The point I refer to is the last paragraph, in which he says:

Under these circumstances the only course open would be to appoint a special commission to investigate the matter, if it is to be proceeded with, and in view of the circumstances attendant on the case, which certainly go to show that these men were shamefully neglected, I believe it to be advisable that some effort should be made to ascertain who is to blame.

CONEYBEARE.

That is dated the 15th of April.

The SOLICITOR GENERAL. I have not seen that letter, it has never been brought under my notice, and I do not believe the Minister of Justice has ever seen it either.

The PRIME MINISTER. There can certainly be no complaint made of the manner in which my hon. friend from Pictou (Mr. Bell) has introduced this matter to the House. He has done it in very temperate language, simply calling the attention of the House to the facts, and has invited the Government to take action upon the matter. I cannot say that I can give the same commendation to the remarks of the senior member for Pictou (Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper), because he gave me the impression that he had in his mind not so much securing a proper remedy as impugning the conduct of the Government in this matter.

Sir CHARLES HIBBERT TUPPER. I certainly consider the Government blameworthy—I do not deny that.

The PRIME MINISTER. In what manner was the Government blameworthy? Where did their responsibility commence? At a certain time in February their attention was called by the coroner who was holding an investigation on the deaths to the fact that his jurisdiction had been interfered with by judicial proceedings. I have no opinion to offer at this moment as to the merits of the action taken by Judge Rouleau. But it is a well known rule of this House that judicial proceedings have to be considered with respect, and we must assume that Judge Rouleau acted in a proper manner in the performance of his duty. The Solicitor General has stated that it was impossible to do anything more. The action suggested by the senior member for Pictou, which might have been done and should have been done, was the appointment of a commission to investigate into the facts. The Government, he said, was not chary about issuing commissions, that they had appointed commissions to investigate offences of partisans, officers, and so on. But my hon. friend forgets, and he should not forget, that at the very moment of which he speaks the Government had appointed a special commission to investigate these matters; the Government at that moment had a commission specially authorized and empowered to investigate into the grievances of the men who had been engaged to work on the Crow's Nest Pass road. It had been sitting for some time, and had been appointed months before, not, however, on these complaints, because they had not been called to the attention of the Government. But complaint had been made to the Government and published in the press that men engaged to work on the railway were not treated in a humane manner, and acting on the complaints then made, the Government appointed a commission to investigate them. It was a commission well organized and it discharged its duty properly. The hon. gentleman should have remembered also that the commission had no power to investigate this case, because