

endowment fund up to date. A project has been inaugurated whereby a permanent fund is established for the keeping of the graves of our soldiers in perpetuity, and that fund requires payments, I think, over a period of five years. The present amount pays the instalment up to a year ago. I may say that the yearly amount payable from now on is something like half a million dollars.

Sir GEORGE PERLEY: I see that last year it was half a million dollars.

Mr. RALSTON: Yes.

Sir GEORGE PERLEY: The minister says this endowment will call for payment extending over a period of five years?

Mr. RALSTON: Yes.

Sir GEORGE PERLEY: So I understand. I know a great deal about the Imperial War Graves Commission, I was a member of it from the beginning of the time I was in England. I have a great admiration and respect for the work the commission are doing, and am very glad the government has co-operated in providing this endowment fund.

Mr. MCGIBBON: What is the basis of the appropriation?

Mr. RALSTON: I am sorry but I cannot give my hon. friend that information at the moment.

Mr. ADSHEAD: Is this exclusively for graves overseas?

Mr. RALSTON: Yes. The Imperial War Graves Commission, as I understand it, deals exclusively with graves overseas.

Sir GEORGE PERLEY: May I say that the Imperial War Graves Commission has to do with the graves of the British soldiers, who fell during the war, throughout the world. Colonel Osborne, of Ottawa, is the secretary for Canada and does the necessary work for the Dominion.

Item agreed to.

Railways—to provide for adjustment of allowances paid for railway and canal employees while they were on service in the Canadian Expeditionary Force during the Great war, \$92,000.

Mr. HANSON: May I ask the minister a question or two in connection with this vote? In the early days of the war the employees of the Canadian government railways were given to understand that they would receive the full pay, as well as their military pay, on enlistment. At that time, I suppose, there was no idea that the war would last so long, or that it would become so great a charge on

the country. Afterwards that policy, as I recollect it, was changed. Is this to supplement the original promise, or just what is the purpose of the vote? Are all the men that enlisted to be treated alike?

Mr. DUNNING: There was no intention by this vote, Mr. Chairman, to go back to the original promises made by the Conservative government in 1914, which were afterwards revised by that very government. But certain situations were created due to the taking over by the government of other railways. This particular amount was required to deal with employees who enlisted prior to May 1, 1915, that being the date upon which certain Grand Trunk Pacific undertakings became government undertakings. The result was that men who enlisted after May 1, 1915, had the advantage of the government's provision, but men who enlisted prior to that time, although employed on the same work, were not legally considered government employees, because they had already gone overseas before the Grand Trunk's undertaking was assumed by the government. Action was taken in connection with this class in the estimates of 1923, and the amount now placed in the estimates is to clean up outstanding claims of that particular class.

Item agreed to.

Canals—St. Peters canal—improvements—additional amount required to pay claim of the Atlantic Dredging Company, \$12,151.96 and interest on same at rate of five per cent per annum from October 1, 1925, \$12,629.72.

Mr. HANSON: I think we should have an explanation of this.

Mr. DUNNING: An original claim by the contractors of an amount of \$46,000, was subsequently whittled down by the department's engineers and by negotiation to the sum here mentioned. I will read an explanatory extract from the report of the engineers; not the whole of it because it is too lengthy. That extract is as follows:

The discrepancy between the original estimate of cost and the final amount paid is explained as follows: When the survey was made on which the original estimate was based, every effort was made to secure accurate information concerning the rock surface, and from points on the work where solid rock could be definitely located and also from the depth of old cribwork where it could be definitely ascertained, a profile showing the probable rock surface was plotted for the information of intending bidders. After the contract was let, it developed that the probable rock surface, as exhibited, for a length of 250 feet was a very hard cemented clay intermixed with stones. Consequently the contractors were required to excavate this material to the bot-