

should take upon themselves the responsibility of refusing any man—I do not care whether he is in the public service or whether he is a private individual—an opportunity of showing to the public that he is not guilty of the crime of which he only stands suspected, and, I say, suspected from the attitude and action of the Government. All I want is for the minister to assure me that he will take up this matter and give this man an opportunity of proving his case before an independent tribunal so that he may have a chance to clear his character. If that opportunity is afforded him and he cannot clear himself, then he must take the responsibility. I have no doubt that in making that request I shall have the support of my hon. friend from the city of St. John who I now see opposite me. I am not finding fault with this man's dismissal, I am not asking at this time for his reinstatement; I am simply pleading that justice be done to one who has been placed in the difficult position in which this man finds himself. I have numerous documents here that I must place on Hansard unless the minister can see his way clear to grant the very reasonable request that is made. I trust therefore my hon. friend will be able to assure me that he will grant the required investigation by a commissioner.

Mr. MACKIE (Edmonton): Could not the party in question have recourse to the law courts if it is a case of wrongful dismissal?

Mr. COPP: I do not know that he could. He was a public servant and I think the Railway Department had a perfect right to dismiss him if he was incompetent or was not giving proper service, although I think he should have received more notice. However, that is not the point I am making.

Mr. MACKIE (Edmonton): Perhaps I misunderstood the hon. member. I understood him to say that the implication against this man was that he was discharged on account of an alleged theft. Surely under the circumstances if there was wrongful dismissal and the man is not guilty he could have recourse to the law courts and could even sue the Government.

Mr. COPP: My hon. friend misunderstood me if he gathered that I said there was an alleged offence. There is no such thing alleged against this man, but the suspicion rests in the public mind. The public know that a theft took place, and when he was summarily dismissed they

[Mr. Copp.]

naturally came to the conclusion that it was on account of this theft. I do not say that the railway officials think that for a moment, but that is the idea in the public mind. It is a very simple thing to give him the opportunity of clearing away any suspicion that may be resting upon him in connection with this matter, and my hon. friend I think should do it. I do not want to take up the time of the House in placing the documents in my possession upon Hansard but I shall have to do so unless the minister will grant my request and save any further argument.

Mr. J. D. REID: This particular case occurred, as the hon. member has stated, during the administration of the late Hon. Mr. Cochrane, and before I became the head of the Department. In order to show that the late Mr. Cochrane was anxious to do everything he could for this man I find that on May 24th, 1917, he wrote Mr. Hayes as follows:

I am anxious that no injustice should be done him, and will be glad if you will look into this matter personally and let me have a complete and detailed statement of the case.

I only give that quotation in order to show that my predecessor had no personal feeling against Mr. Carvill.

Mr. COPP: I know that; I do not blame the minister.

Mr. J. D. REID: Mr. Carvill had been for a number of years ticket agent at St. John, and the records show that in the performance of the duties he was careless and negligent. Previous to this theft his work had not been of a satisfactory character, and the officials of the department had drawn his attention to the fact that he was not attending to his business in a proper manner. Later on the theft, which resulted in the loss of several hundred dollars, took place from the ticket office. The railway officials believed that Mr. Carvill was not looking after the office as well as he should, and that probably owing to his carelessness this theft occurred; but there is nothing to show that at that time or since they ever entertained the slightest belief that Mr. Carvill was guilty, or that they suspected him in any way of being concerned with the theft. In fact they exonerated him of that in every possible way. Neither did the late Mr. Cochrane believe that Mr. Carvill had anything to do with the theft. Having informed Mr. Carvill, or his friends, that