

Mr. VIEN: That is, the financial statement of the Board of Trustees of the Canadian National Railways. Now Mr. Stewart has introduced into the question a statement made by the minister in the House of Commons. That statement was made not upon the reference to this committee or any matter covered by the reference, but upon a totally different matter, namely, whether it is expedient for the parliament of Canada to change the system of the management of our Canadian National Railways.

Hon. Mr. STEWART: Mr. Chairman, I have tried to make it clear that I do not desire to discuss that matter at all. That is a matter for the House of Commons. It is only the statement in connection with the administration and the operation of the railway that I wish to invite the chairman of the board of trustees to make a statement on.

Mr. VIEN: Therefore, I repeat my question. Will Mr. Stewart read that particular question?

Hon. Mr. STEWART: Certainly I will read it.

Mr. VIEN: Will he read the particular section of the statement, so that there will be no doubt about it?

Mr. BOTHWELL: Before that is read, I want to make my position clear so far as this whole matter is concerned. I hardly think it is fair to ask the Chairman of the Board of Trustees to make a statement in answer to a statement made by the minister on the floor of the house.

Mr. VIEN: I agree.

Mr. BOTHWELL: We are a fact finding committee and we have to make a report to the house in connection with the management of the Canadian National Railways, on the reference made to this committee. The statement that has been read from Hansard may be analyzed and certain questions asked on it. The argument then can take place in the house on the facts elicited from the answers to those questions. It is not a fair proceeding, as I see it, and it never was contemplated by the reference to this committee, that we should have a statement taken from Hansard, a statement filed in answer to that by the chairman of the board and then introduce those on the floor of the house. We are only supposed to find facts and argue what we see fit when we get on the floor of the house.

Mr. WALSH: If you will permit a new member of this committee to interpret himself, I would like to lend my support to the contention of Mr. Stewart. The minister did make certain statements which I consider rather damaging to the management of the Canadian National Railways; and this is the only opportunity that any member of the house has of getting the official point of view from the chairman of the board of trustees or from any member of the board of trustees. When we are debating this on the floor of the house, it is all very well for us to express our opinion as being contrary to the opinion expressed by the Minister of Railways. But here we have the other contending authority in contradiction to the statements made by the Minister of Railways, and it is our only opportunity of hearing the point of view of the trustees and particularly of the Chairman of the board of trustees. No one else is in a proper position to reply to the statements made by the Minister of Railways except the Chairman of the board of trustees. I think it is in the interests of the Canadian National Railways, that it is in the public interests, and that it is in the interest of the members of this committee, to have a statement from the Chairman of the board of trustees so that we will know and get his point of view. Then we will be in a position to judge as between the statement made on the floor of the house by the Minister of Railways and the statement that would be made here before this committee by the Chairman of the board of trustees. In that way we would be able to effectively and efficiently carry on a debate in the house. We cannot do so under present conditions. We cannot take the statement made