

Canada Lands Surveys Act

certificate requires a very wide experience in scientific surveying operations. As a matter of fact, only 32 have qualified as dominion topographical surveyors since 1875, whereas 828 have obtained their commission as dominion land surveyors since the same date.

The chairman, the members and the secretary of the board are all civil servants who have a full-time job to do, with the result that the duties imposed upon them because of their appointment to the board are over and above their normal daily duties and consequently this extra work, I am informed, has to be done outside normal working hours. The board members, because of the type of work that they have to perform—here I wish to refer particularly to the setting up of examination papers and the marking of those papers—can more conveniently and in a more satisfactory manner perform that work individually. The result of this is that the bulk of the work is not done at meetings for which the fees provided in clause 7, as it now stands, could be paid. For many years the members of the board have considered themselves as attending a meeting as contemplated by the act when performing the type of work mentioned, and were paid on an estimated number of sittings based on the average number of days during which the member has to work in setting up and marking the examination papers rather than the actual number of meetings at which they attended. I am informed that the meetings where the board may sit as such are from five to six annually. If the board members were to be compensated on the basis of these five or six meetings, the compensation would not be adequate considering the amount of work required to be done.

Because the number of candidates may vary from year to year with the result that the work may increase or decrease from year to year, it is intended by this bill to provide for a remuneration at an annual rate to be fixed by the treasury board on the recommendation of the civil service commission. Based on the experience of the past and on the volume of work to be done, this basis of remuneration seems more equitable and more logical under the circumstances.

With regard to the second amendment which deals with the fees payable to special examiners I wish, for the benefit of those who might not be familiar with the operation of the Canada Lands Surveys Act, to briefly explain how and when such special examiners are appointed. First of all, under section 8 of the act, the minister may, upon the recommendation of the board, appoint qualified persons as special examiners to examine candidates. Special examiners must be either

dominion land surveyors or provincial land surveyors duly qualified under the laws of the province in which they will preside at examinations to be held therein.

Generally speaking, surveyors who are not civil servants are only appointed special examiners when surveyors of the government are not available to hold the examinations or when the cost of sending a surveyor from Ottawa to the place of examination is considered greater than the cost of the appointment of a local qualified surveyor. Special examiners as a rule are appointed when examinations are held at centres other than Ottawa.

Section 9 of the act now provides that a special examiner is entitled to receive \$25 for each day's sitting of examination at which he presides, together with his actual living and travelling expenses. It is known that the prevailing tariff rate of land surveyors associations or corporations in the several provinces of Canada is not the same in every province. According to figures shown to me recently, the prevailing tariff rates vary from \$25 to \$50 per day. Hon. members will easily understand the difficulty encountered on certain occasions in obtaining a special examiner at the rate of \$25 per day, as set out in the act, when the prevailing rate in the province may be much higher than that. The provincial tariff rates vary from time to time, with the result that a fixed fee as now established renders the operation of that part of the act extremely difficult. By this amendment it is therefore intended to have the fee payable to special examiners fixed by the treasury board in order to give the obviously required flexibility to the operation of this section.

Mr. Green: Would the minister tell the committee the number of dominion land surveyors registered at the present time, and also whether there has been an increase in numbers as a result of the opening up of the Northwest Territories and the Yukon? As I understand it, a surveyor, to undertake work in these districts in Canada, must be a dominion land surveyor, although there may be some provision by which a provincial land surveyor can do that work. Most of this surveying work in Canada naturally would be done in the provinces. For that work I take it that it is unnecessary for a surveyor to be a dominion land surveyor. When the dominion owned the natural resources in the western prairie provinces I presume there was a much bigger demand for dominion land surveyors. Will the minister give us information along these lines so that we may have some idea of just how important these amendments will be?

[Mr. Prudham.]