

Committee on Defence Expenditure

Let us see what the man best qualified in the whole of Canada to state the facts has told us on this point. As reported on page 714 of *Hansard*, Mr. Currie, under the heading "The Attempts to Estimate Losses", had this to say:

These, then, represent the ascertained cases of irregularity at Petawawa. How many more there may have been will never be known. It was apparent from the beginning of the investigation that the accounting records were in a chaotic condition and would be of little use in determining the nature and extent of irregularities. It is impractical, and perhaps impossible, regardless of the time which might be spent on examining records, to try and determine by this means the amount and value of the deficiencies.

That is the statement of a man accustomed to examining accounts. That is the statement of the man chosen by the government to conduct this inquiry. That is the statement of the man whom they described as the best qualified in Canada. That is the statement of a man in whose integrity and accuracy we have indicated our complete confidence. He tells us that these figures cannot be estimated, that the accounting methods are so chaotic that the amount of the losses will never be known.

Let us see what has been said during this debate in regard to some of those things. Speaking for the government, the Prime Minister made the statement that there were no horses on the payroll. We have the positive statement of Mr. Currie that there were. What is the authority for these statements that there are none?

Mr. St. Laurent: The payrolls.

Mr. Drew: The Prime Minister interjects the word "payrolls." When he discussed the report the evidence that he relied on was the evidence of a man convicted of a crime and now in the penitentiary. He ranged that man's evidence against the evidence of Mr. Currie. In fact they waited in order to get this very important evidence so that he could make the statement. Remember that this was not any casual statement by Mr. Currie; this was a statement which had been reconsidered by Mr. Currie. This is the statement which the government tried to have kept out of the report.

An hon. Member: No evidence of that.

Mr. Drew: Oh, yes, there is. This is the statement that was considered and discussed and that Mr. Currie chose to keep in. There is no question as to the good faith of the Prime Minister in making the statement, but the fact remains that he was relying on information which had come to him through channels which are challenged by every finding in this report. He was relying on information which came to him from a man

who was convicted in connection with the very irregularities which are reported to us. I might say that he was relying on the evidence of a man who is now in the penitentiary and is seeking a parole.

An hon. Member: He will get it.

Mr. Drew: There is another thing I should like to point out. In an attempt to create the impression of inaccuracy in this report reference was made to the railway siding at Petawawa. The explanation with reference to this or the attempt to diminish its importance has two most interesting aspects.

Mr. Garson: I wonder if my hon. friend will permit a question. He has just made the statement that Sergeant Young is seeking a parole. Would he tell us upon what authority he makes that statement?

Mr. Drew: I would ask the Minister of Justice (Mr. Garson) if he will say that it is not so.

Mr. Garson: I most certainly will. The remissions branch comes under the Department of Justice and certainly no application for a parole has come to my attention. That is the reason I asked the question.

Mr. Drew: I repeat that the man in question is seeking a parole. The Minister of Justice is well able to find that out if he will seek the information.

Mr. Garson: May I ask my hon. friend the source of his information? Did he get it from Sergeant Young?

Mr. Drew: I am referring now to the statement made in the Currie report in regard to the railway siding as reported on page 713 of *Hansard*.

In one striking instance, a large quantity of rails belonging to the Canadian Pacific railway was removed. When this loss was noted by the C.P.R. and questions raised, a spur line of the Canadian National running into the ordnance depot was taken up and the rails used to replace the missing C.P.R. track.

Some importance was attached to the statement that these rails did not belong to the Canadian National. I would point out the careful distinction that is drawn in this finding between the rails of the Canadian Pacific that were taken up and the Canadian National siding. My recollection of Petawawa goes back a great many years and the second siding from which the rails were removed has been known as the Canadian National siding since it was built into that camp. Those were the rails that were taken up.

However, the most interesting feature of this is that the government seems to think

[Mr. Drew.]