

in the city of Quebec, and, while he does not speak French fluently, he understands it and reads it thoroughly. I wish to say that in justice to Mr. Justice Cassels. No case that may be heard before Mr. Justice Cassels can suffer at his hands because he understands and reads French. My hon. friend also referred to the position of the Solicitor General. As long as I occupied that position I always appeared, on behalf of the government, in the cases that were tried before the courts where my presence was necessary. But, I could not represent the government, as the present Solicitor General cannot, while the House was in session. The Solicitor General is at times obliged to be represented by other attorneys. There are some trivial cases in far away districts, in the Yukon, in British Columbia, in Prince Edward Island and in the maritime provinces, where it would be simply preposterous to think of sending the Solicitor General to represent the government. The cost would be exorbitant, the country would lose the large expenditure involved and the public interest would not be better served.

As regards the board of Railway Commissioners I quite agree with my hon. friend that the French element in the province of Quebec and in the other provinces are entitled to a fair hearing and a fair understanding before that board. I do not dispute at all the contention of my hon. friend that they should be placed upon a footing of equality. I believe that after the declaration made this evening by my hon. friend the Minister of Railways and Canals there will be no shadow of grievance in the future. I contend that there have been no grievances in the past, but there will be none in the future—I am sure of that.

Mr. MONK. I think that my hon. friend (Mr. Lemieux) would have shortened the discussion if he had simply concurred in the suggestion I made that the government should look into this question. My hon. friend has spoken about Mr. Justice Cassels; I made no complaint whatever as regards Judge Cassels. He is perfectly satisfactory to us in the province of Quebec. What I did say was this—because I think my hon. friend the Postmaster General was absent at that moment—that if you were to take up the list of suits against the Crown during any given year and see what the defence of these suits has cost us through the employment of outside lawyers, you would find that the bill of expense has been very considerable indeed and you would wonder how it is that with a Solicitor General, to whom we pay \$5,000 a year, and quite a staff in the department, we are not able, in the majority of cases, to see to the defence of the interests of the country without the employment of these outside lawyers. I, therefore, said that there is some extrava-

gance in this. Well, if there is extravagance in that the making of provision for a French secretary in the province of Quebec for the business that is to be transacted in French is a reasonable proposition; it is not an extravagant one. I do not make it in order to raise in any sense the question of religion or race. The matter has been brought to my notice seven or eight times during the past year and by a number of letters since the decision rendered in the district court in Terrebonne in a case which arose at St. Jerome where the court dismissed the complaint on the ground that the ordinary courts of the province had no jurisdiction and that all requests for a farm crossing must be addressed directly to the Board of Railway Commissioners. I have made no complaint about Mr. Justice Cassels. I think that demand is a reasonable one and I wonder why the Postmaster General, who knows that such a demand exists in the district of Montreal, has not upheld it here.

Mr. LEMIEUX. Which demand?

Mr. MONK. The demand for a French secretary where the secretary of the board is not fully conversant with both languages.

Mr. LEMIEUX. I am not against it.

Mr. MONK. Is my hon. friend in favour of it?

Mr. LEMIEUX. Certainly.

Mr. LENNOX. I refer to what the right hon. the First Minister said in reference to specializing. That argument carries us just a step too far and it might just as well point out where a difficulty is likely to arise. When we appointed the railway board it was the understanding that we were appointing a non-technical body, that we were appointing a body that would not incorporate all the technicalities of the old law courts, that we were appointing a court which would be the court of the farmer, the mechanic, the merchant and the every day man; and that the rules would be so framed as that almost any man might plead his own case. When the First Minister points out that it is necessary to have a special pleader, a man who has devoted himself to some special line—in this instance to railway law—and that therefore there might be an argument against the Solicitor General appearing and representing the people before that board, I want to call the Prime Minister's attention to the fact that we must guard against that board becoming so technical by rules or procedure as that any ordinary man cannot effectively plead his own case. The argument in the main of the First Minister is an argument that we should work against. We must endeavour to have that board frame such rules as that the farmer or business man, who is affected by a railway