

Then there is the Minister of Justice who said to me that he had resigned as a director of the bank of Montreal as soon as he was appointed Minister of Justice. I do not find fault with him. It was his right to resign, if he wished. It is the right of any minister to be director of any company, so long as it is known by the public.

But what I want to know is: On what date did the perpetual Acting Minister of Finance resign from the board of Barclay's bank, and from the boards of the other coal companies or steel companies, and so on, and so on, which appeared in the reference books, before he was appointed Minister of Finance? On what date did he resign? If it is the practice for ministers to resign from boards, then on what date did he resign from the boards on which he sat from 1935 to 1939, when he was sworn in again as Minister of Finance, and before he became Minister of National Defence, upon the death of Hon. Mr. Rogers?

It would be interesting to have an acknowledgment of his resignation from the companies concerned, banks and so on. Or, if he did not resign—

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): Order.

Mr. POULIOT: I have a perfect right to speak.

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): I rise to a point of order. This discussion has nothing whatsoever to do with the item before the committee.

Mr. POULIOT: We are discussing item 47—

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr. Golding): This is the item for departmental administration in the Department of Finance.

Mr. POULIOT: Yes. The minister is head of that department, and the perpetual acting minister is the acting head of the department, having control of the whole departmental administration, next to the minister himself. I want to know—and this is vital—what are the connections, if any, between the perpetual Acting Minister of Finance and the department? I want to know more particularly because the Minister of Justice resigned from the board of the bank of Montreal when he accepted his seat in the government—

Mr. MACKENZIE (Vancouver Centre): Order.

Mr. POULIOT: —to be sworn in as Minister of Justice.

Some hon. MEMBERS: Order.

Mr. POULIOT: I am speaking to the point of order.

[Mr. Pouliot.]

The ACTING CHAIRMAN (Mr. Golding): The Minister of Justice should not be brought into the discussion.

Mr. POULIOT: No, no; I am not saying anything against him. I am praising him for being logical with himself. And I would tell you more than that, sir, that I do not object to any minister's resigning from a board when he is called to the cabinet. I will go even farther than that; I do not object to any minister being on a board, so long as it is publicly known and published in the reference books. But the very moment that publicity in respect of directorships is stopped, I find it wrong.

If it is right for the minister to be on a board, the public has a right to know it, and has more right to know it when it is the Department of Finance. That is my point.

To conclude, I should like to know from the Minister of Finance or from his acting colleague what the rule is regarding the holding of directorships by members of the cabinet. That is my question.

Mr. RALSTON: And would you like to have an answer?

Mr. POULIOT: Yes.

Mr. RALSTON: So far as I am concerned, I know of no general rule. But I know the rule I applied to myself, and that rule was that immediately I accepted the portfolio of Minister of Finance I resigned every directorship I held, except one, and that one was in connection with a small company. I happened to be the executor of the estate of a gentleman who was president of that company, and whose widow I felt I should assist for the time being by continuing to act on that board. I resigned the directorship soon after. I cannot say whether I resigned the others on the day I accepted the portfolio, but I am satisfied it was that day or the next day that I resigned every directorship, with the single exception I have mentioned.

Mr. POULIOT: May I ask the minister if the directorship he did not resign was in Barclay's Trust?

Mr. RALSTON: The directorship I did not resign at the time was in the Malcolm Furniture company, a company in which the Hon. James Malcolm, a late personal friend and colleague of mine was interested. I was on that board because I was a joint executor with Mrs. Malcolm of his estate.

Mr. GILLIS: I have received a number of protests with regard to the application of orders 184 and 284 which fix quotas for the