

Lake for the subsidy that this Parliament has granted to the company. Now, if that is the case, it shows that the company has been enabled to grind the face of the poor workingmen in that country. There is no doubt as to the evidence on this point. Men, almost by the score, who have been obliged, because they could not secure enough money to pay their way, to walk the entire distance from the scene of their work back to civilization, have complained most bitterly of the treatment received—in some cases of the food, in some cases of the places they have been obliged to sleep, and so on. It is only fair, if the country has paid for this work that the men should receive proper treatment, and it should be the duty of the Government to inquire into this question fully and carefully. I may say also that I have it on the best authority that the contractors have been treated most shabbily by the company.

I know as a matter of fact that a number of contractors who went out there hoping to make a fair living, have been obliged to leave the work, claiming that not only did they not make any money but they lost the little they had when they went there. In one or two cases contractors failed and were unable to pay their liabilities, and left the men who worked for them without sufficient money to return to civilization. I am also informed that some other contractors still remain in the mountains with the promise, it is said, of a reclassification of the work which they have done, in the hope that they would be able to secure sufficient to pay their honest debts and return to civilization. Now, with regard to the death of these two men, a young man who was employed on that work came down on the train, I think, which followed these two men. I met him in Winnipeg, and he informed me that these men were placed in a box car and left there to die, without anybody to attend to their wants, and without the attendance of a medical man. It is well known that every employee of the Crow's Nest Pass Railway has been obliged to contribute 50 cents a month of his wages to pay for medical attendance; and it seems an outrage and one that the Government should carefully investigate, that these men, after paying this fee monthly, were left to die in that manner. I hope, speaking on behalf of the people that I represent, that there will be the most searching investigation, and that whoever is responsible for the brutal treatment accorded these men, will be properly punished.

The SOLICITOR GENERAL (Mr. Fitzpatrick). I had not the advantage of being present this morning when this matter was first discussed. I think, however, it is proper, from the standpoint of the Department of Justice, that I should state the facts that were brought out, and that I should state to the House what is the responsibility

Mr. RICHARDSON.

that attaches to us. On the 8th of February last, Mr. Mead, the coroner who was appointed by the Government of the North-west Territories, not by the Government of the Dominion of Canada, held an investigation into the cause of the death of these two young men. During the course of this investigation, a notice was served upon him to restrain him from proceeding further, by way of an injunction. So soon as he received notice of the application for the injunction, he communicated with the Department of Justice, and then for the first time the attention of the department was drawn to the matter. On the very same day, the 8th of February, he was asked whether he was willing, of his own accord, to retire from the investigation, so that some one else could be substituted against whom the charges could not be made that were made against him. The injunction was taken against him on the ground that he was a person interested; that is to say, that he would be a competent witness himself, as he was the party who attended the deceased at the time of their death in the box car at Pincher Creek. The ground upon which the injunction was applied for was that he, having attended the deceased himself, should have been a witness at the investigation instead of acting as a coroner. Immediately upon receipt of that information, and upon the statement by the coroner that he did not wish to withdraw—and, of course, there was no way open to us by which we could force him to withdraw—we then communicated with the agent of the Department of Justice, Mr. Coneybeare, for a full statement of all that had taken place. He reported on the 24th of February, and then for the first time I appeared myself on the scene. I asked Mr. Coneybeare to instruct the Department of Justice on all the facts, so that we might be able to form an opinion ourselves as to whether criminal proceedings might be adopted against the parties connected with this transaction. Mr. Coneybeare reported fully all the facts connected with the matter, and the conclusion of his report is in these words:

I could not recommend instituting criminal proceedings until the responsibility was more definitely located.

We made inquiry then for the purpose of locating more definitely the responsibility, as our agent suggested. It appears from the facts reported to us that these men were in the employ of the Crow's Nest Pass Railway Company, or rather of the contractors in the mountains. They took diphtheria in the mountains, and they were immediately put into a van and removed from that section upon which they were then working, so that they might be taken to the hospital at Lethbridge. They came down from that section and passed through the two adjoining sections before they reached the place called Pincher Creek, on the way to Leth-