

acquiring the Canadian Northern Railway was capricious and ill-considered, in that he referred to Government-owned railways as a "toy?" Second: Has the Government considered whether the loquacity of the Chief Commissioner on current politics can be limited?

Right Hon. ARTHUR MEIGHEN (Prime Minister): I have observed reports of addresses delivered by the Chief Commissioner, but the statement referred to by the hon. member had not previously come to my notice. The Chief Commissioner, or any commissioner of the Railway Board, is not an officer of the Government. The only control with regard to him has been provided by Parliament and will be found in the Railway Act.

Mr. FIELDING: Has he not the rank and status of a judge? If so, are we, or are we not, at liberty to discuss his proceedings here?

Mr. MEIGHEN: I do not propose to discuss them. If the question comes up, it will be a point of order for Mr. Speaker.

GRAND TRUNK ARBITRATION

On the Orders of the Day:

Mr. FRANK CAHILL (Pontiac): In view of the discontinuance of the arbitration proceedings between the Grand Trunk and the Government, is the Government now released from its obligations under the agreement?

Right Hon. ARTHUR MEIGHEN (Prime Minister): I have answered similar questions before, and it is my duty to answer this one. In the first place, I do not think the question is a proper one on the Orders of the Day; and, secondly, legal opinions cannot be given on a question asked at this stage.

THE ROUMANIAN LOAN

On the Orders of the Day:

Mr. S. W. JACOBS (George Etienne Cartier): On the first of this month I inquired of the Government as to whether the interest on the Roumanian loan had been paid on that day, and I was told that information would be sought and given to the House later on. Has the Minister of Finance any information on the subject now?

Sir HENRY DRAYTON (Minister of Finance): This question was answered on a previous occasion, in reply either to the hon. member or some other hon. gentleman. The interest has not yet been paid.

[Mr. Mowat.]

ST. JOHN AND QUEBEC RAILWAY

On motion of Hon. J. D. Reid (Minister of Railways and Canals) the House went into committee to consider the following proposed resolution, Mr. Boivin in the Chair:

Resolved, That the provisions of chapter thirty-one of the statutes of 1919 respecting the extension of the time for the completion of the Saint John and Quebec Railway between Centreville in the county of Carleton, and Andover in the county of Victoria, be amended by substituting the thirty-first day of December, 1923, for the thirty-first day of December, 1921.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Why is the extension necessary?

Hon. Mr. REID: I am introducing the Bill to be founded on this resolution at the request of the Premier of New Brunswick. The St. John and Quebec railway is really a provincial line, but it has not yet been completed. Two branch lines have been constructed, in connection with this system—one of one hundred and twenty miles and the other of forty-five miles—between Andover and Centreville. The construction by the Provincial Government was delayed on account of the war and by reason of financial conditions. The present Bill extends the time for the construction of that portion of the system referred to in the resolution for another two years. Two years ago I introduced a Bill granting an extension from 1919 to 1921; it is now proposed to further extend the time from 1921 to 1922.

Mr. SINCLAIR (Guysborough): Are these railways to be taken over by the Dominion Government?

Hon. Mr. REID: No. The agreement with the Provincial Government is that the Dominion Government will operate the system on a percentage basis.

Mr. SINCLAIR (Guysborough): Are the roads that are being operated profitable to the Dominion Government?

Hon. Mr. REID: No, they are not. For the twelve months ending December 31, 1920, the gross earnings were \$218,127.54, while the operating expenses were \$564,143.03, showing an operating deficit of \$346,015.49. This is exclusive of the forty per cent gross earnings, amounting to \$87,251, payable as rental money.

Mr. SINCLAIR (Guysborough): Does the minister expect that operation of the road he is now projecting will have a similar result?