

RAILWAYS—POOL TRAINS

On the orders of the day:

Mr. F. G. SANDERSON (South Perth): I desire to ask a question of the Minister of Railways and Canals regarding the pool trains of the two railway systems between Toronto and Ottawa, and Toronto and Montreal, which trains are now running. Did the railway systems get the consent of the Board of Railway Commissioners, or is it necessary that they should get its consent to run those pool trains?

Hon. R. J. MANION (Minister of Railways and Canals): I am afraid I cannot answer the question offhand. I shall look into it and give my hon. friend an answer to-morrow. This matter is not submitted to me or to the government in any way; it is an arrangement between the two railways. I shall get the information and inform my hon. friend to-morrow.

RAILWAYS AND SHIPPING

On the orders of the day:

Mr. A. L. BEAUBIEN (Provencher): Is it the intention to have the special committee on government railways and shipping meet before Easter?

Hon. R. J. MANION (Minister of Railways and Canals): There is standing in my name a resolution which will, I think, come up to-morrow, and as soon as it passes and the bill based on it is introduced, we shall probably have a meeting of the committee. That will most likely be the beginning of next week.

SUPPLY

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

The house in committee of supply, Mr. Gagnon in the chair.

Penitentiaries—amount required for cost of administration, construction, purchase of land, supplies and equipment, maintenance and discharge of inmates at Kingston, St. Vincent de Paul, Dorchester, Manitoba, British Columbia, Piers island, Saskatchewan and Collin's Bay penitentiaries, \$2,941,400.

Mr. REID: Has the minister any information regarding the expenditure and the number of inmates that are at Piers island?

Hon. HUGH GUTHRIE (Minister of Justice): This matter in regard to Piers island was brought to my attention a few days ago by the hon. member for Comox-Alberni (Mr. Neill), and I prepared a statement which will probably cover the inquiry of the hon. member for New Westminster (Mr. Reid). In

[Mr. Rhodes.]

the first place, the acreage of the island known as Piers island, which is now a penitentiary, is 254 acres, about 40 acres of which is cleared. Negotiations are under way for the lease of the island by the government. No money has been paid to the owners; they are asking \$3,600 per annum and the department has offered \$420. The matter is before the exchequer court by way of expropriation proceedings for lease, not for purchase, and I anticipate that the case will be heard some time next June, because the president of the exchequer court is at that time proceeding to British Columbia to hear the cases from that province and we shall endeavour to have this one ready for hearing then.

The expenditure on buildings and wharves to date is: for material, \$29,769; for labour, \$24,000; for pump, engine, lumber, etc., \$3,807. The number of convicts confined on the island on the first day of March was: males, 295; females, 279.

The fifth inquiry that I received would be answered as follows: All employees on Piers island are appointees of the civil service commission. Piers Island penitentiary is administered by the warden and staff of the British Columbia penitentiary, officials being transferred for temporary employment on Piers island. This has necessitated the employment of an extra number of temporary police guards; one physician, part time, \$1,500 per annum; one male hospital nurse and five matrons have also been temporarily employed.

A question has, I believe, reached the newspapers in regard to the purchase of toilet articles and I might give the information I have received to date in regard to that. In the purchase of toilet sets cognizance was taken of the fact that such articles were for temporary use only and therefore bowls and tanks suitable for removal and installation in one of the penitentiaries were purchased. The cost of the former was \$6.82 each, and of the latter, \$11.89 each, delivered at Piers island. Sixty-four sets were purchased and delivered. All fixtures, lumber, pump, engine will be removed to one of the penitentiaries when Piers island is abandoned as a penitentiary.

Mr. LAPOINTE: We shall not own the property there?

Mr. GUTHRIE: No, we propose only to lease the island and there is a wide difference between the government and the owners of the island as to the value of the rental. There was a negotiation for the purchase of the island, but the price was so high that we did not consider it.