

cessary, because everybody who is a resident of the country has an interest as a tax-payer in all the legislation of this House. That is a proper interest, and I would not want to say that because a man has that general interest, which might be more or less pecuniary, he should be debarred from voting. I would suggest striking out the word 'direct' and substituting the word 'special' or 'personal', so that the interest would be something that pertains to the member as distinct from the rest of the country. The word 'direct' I do not think is strong enough, because it does not reach members who might have and I am afraid sometimes do have a special pecuniary interest in legislation, different from the rest of the country. I would therefore move to strike out the word 'direct' and insert in lieu thereof the word 'special'.

Mr. FIELDING. Pecuniary interest I think would always be understood to mean individual interest. As my hon. friend says, we are all interested generally in the affairs of the country. I agree with what my hon. friend says in regard to the word 'direct', and it might help the rule to leave that word out; but I do not think the insertion of the word 'special' would help it.

Mr. G. H. McINTYRE. Many members are shareholders in banks or in railways. Should they be precluded from taking part in legislation relating to banks or railways?

Mr. FIELDING. I think such a member would be free under the rule to take part in general legislation affecting banks or railways; but he would be disqualified from taking part in legislation dealing with the particular bank or railway in which he was a shareholder.

Mr. G. H. McINTYRE. There have been instances in which members of this House who have been prominently associated with large institutions have taken part in legislation directly affecting those institutions.

Mr. FIELDING. If it were general legislation affecting all companies, I think it would be unreasonable to enforce the rule that they should not participate; but if the legislation dealt with the particular company in which a member was interested, certainly he should be disqualified.

Mr. HAGGART. This rule is the same, word for word, as that of the British parliament. The explanation given of it by Mr. Speaker Peel is as follows:

The interest must be a direct pecuniary interest separately belonging to the person whose vote is questioned and not in common with the rest of His Majesty's subjects or in a matter of state policy.

So I think we had better stick to the imperial rule.

Mr. SPROULE. It has always seemed to me desirable that this rule should be

Mr. LANCASTER.

amended, for this reason. We have frequent instances of members of this House who are practically the owners and controllers of certain railways for which government subsidies are proposed, taking part in the discussion and bringing all their influence to bear in favour of having those subsidies voted. Do you call that a direct pecuniary interest? That money goes to them as stockholders of the company. That is not the same as the general public interest. If public money were voted, for instance, to a paper of which a member was the sole proprietor, he would be regarded as having a direct pecuniary interest in the vote. I could never see the reason why a member who is one of half a dozen men who are receiving consideration from this parliament has not as direct a pecuniary interest as he would have if the whole consideration went to him personally.

Mr. STOCKTON. In the English rule the word 'separate' occurs after the word 'direct'. The ruling of Mr. Speaker Charles Shaw-Lefevre, is stated as follows:

The rule that a member cannot vote upon a matter in which he has a direct and separate pecuniary interest, applies as well to his votes in select committees as it does to his votes in the House. If the only interest of a member in a question is such that it cannot be separated from that of the public, his vote is not affected by it.

That would cover the point suggested by the hon. Minister of Finance that under the rule a member would not be disqualified from voting or taking part in debate, either in the House or in a committee, in regard to legislation relating generally to banks or railways, although he might be interested in a particular bank or railway.

Sir WILFRID LAURIER. I think we had better adhere to the wording of the old rule, which is the wording of the English rule, the meaning of which, as interpreted by various speakers, is well understood.

Mr. SPROULE. But if we find in practice that the spirit of the rule is violated, is it not time that we should provide a remedy? I think it is. An instance came before the local legislature only two or three sessions ago, when two members, to whom a large amount of money was owing as railway contractors, voted upon the question of pledging the credit of the province to the extent of \$2,000,000, which would indirectly go into their own pockets. The question was raised, and it was decided that these gentlemen had a right to vote on that question. I do not think the general public reach that conclusion. I do not see any great difference between a member being one of five forming a corporation to whom \$100,000 of public money is voted for division among them, and having the money voted directly to himself. In many cases we have members of parliament, who are