

can protect their own railway, and we do not need to vote \$5,000 or \$10,000 or even five cents for special counsel. We have the Department of Justice, and counsel attached to the Railway Department. If the minister seriously makes the declaration that the railways do not belong to us, but are absolutely independent of the Government and their interests different from those of the Government, I think the people of this country will have something to say to the Government.

Mr. CAMPBELL: Will the minister give a concrete case, or even a hypothetical case, where this money might be used? Candidly, I do not understand just for what purpose it is to be used.

Hon. Mr. REID: In answer to the hon. member for Dorchester (Mr. Cannon), if it was a case in connection with the Canadian National Railways they would pay their own counsel; the money would not come out of this vote at all; but there are cases where it might be in the public interest to engage outside counsel.

Mr. CHISHOLM: For instance?

Hon. Mr. REID: There might be a telephone rate case, or something of that kind, where the public should be represented other than by the officials of the commission. This vote has been used in years past, and it is thought well to keep it there to protect the public.

Mr. CANNON: When was the last case?

Hon. Mr. REID: If the hon. member wishes me to give some better explanation, I would suggest that the item stand and I would ask the Chairman of the Commission to furnish me with more details.

Mr. CHISHOLM: Has this item been used in one instance?

Hon. Mr. REID: My deputy tells me that it was used three years ago.

Mr. CANNON: In what case?

Hon. Mr. REID: I cannot say at the moment, but if the hon. member wants concrete cases, we can let the item stand until after dinner, and I can get the information from the commission.

Mr. CANNON: I would like to have the explanation now. I do not want to be unjust to the minister. He does not know everything, but what he does not know, his

[Mr. Cannon.]

help here ought to know. When he comes before this committee, I think we are entitled to a satisfactory explanation, and I think we should have it now. The minister is a very clever man, in a way. Whenever he does not give an explanation, he proposes that we should go and have dinner, knowing that after our dinner is over our digestions may not be in good order and we may forget about the explanation. I want that explanation now, not after dinner, and I think it is only fair that the minister should give it. The minister has right next to him his chief engineer and the deputy minister, who knows all about the railway situation in Canada and the Railway Commission. My hon friend, a moment ago, told us that one concrete instance in which this item might be applied would be the case where the Canadian Northern might be before the commission. His second statement nullified the first, because he said it would not apply in such cases. When I asked the minister to state a real instance of this application, he said it would apply when a telephone case was before the commission. Why should it apply particularly when a telephone case is before the commission? Would it be because, when a telephone company is before the commission, some of the commissioners cannot sit? We ought to know. I am a lawyer, accustomed to pleading before the courts, and as a rule, whenever a question arises before a court, parties interested are represented by counsel and the tribunal has not to pay extra counsel. Generally the parties interested have too much representation.

Mr. FIELDING: I am going to come to the aid of the minister. I have a hazy recollection of circumstances arising which led to this vote being originally proposed. You do not want any special vote for the Canadian Northern, or the Canadian Pacific, or the Grand Trunk, or a telephone company, or any of the big corporations; they are always represented before the Railway Commission. But I think it was alleged that sometimes a public interest is developed which is not represented before the commission, the case of some person who is not able to employ expensive counsel, and it was thought well to make provision for such cases.

Mr. PARENT: If the Minister of Railways had made such a statement as we have just heard, there would have been no objection to the vote.

Item agreed to.