

AFTERNOON SESSION

TUESDAY, April 14, 1959.

3:30 p.m.

The CHAIRMAN: Gentlemen, I see we have a quorum. I think the first thing we will deal with is a question which was raised by Mr. Fisher in regard to the procedure of calling witnesses.

I consulted with the Speaker of the House and with the Clerk and this is their report. To begin with the decision is made by the committee. Witnesses are summoned by an order signed by the chairman; no witness shall be so summoned and paid unless the certificate shall have been first filed with the chairman by a member of the committee, according to the standing order.

This morning we had a motion by Mr. Fisher in this regard. What is the feeling of the committee? I will read the motion.

Moved by Mr. Fisher and seconded by Mr. Howard that Mr. H. Styffe and Mr. E. G. Charnock, Port Arthur and Fort William be called before this committee and that their travel and other expenses be paid.

Mr. CHEVRIER: Mr. Chairman, may I say a word on the motion?

When the motion was made this morning I did not know who the members or the witnesses were to be called. I have since met one—one that I know—and who has made representations to me before, not in committee but to me personally when I was in the capacity that the Hon. Minister of Transport now occupies, and I have some idea of what the representations are going to be. It would seem unfortunate to me if the motion is not adopted, in so far as he is concerned.

Mr. BELL (*Saint John-Albert*): I did not have a chance to spend much time on the actual rule applying to this but I did look up section 263 and it says, "material witnesses shall be summoned".

I do not think there has been a meeting of this committee whereby it was agreed that these witnesses should be summoned in this particular instance and I feel they have not even begun to qualify to enable them to submit a claim for expenses. The clause we have not decided on as a committee is, that these particular witnesses are necessary, material or expert and that they should be called. I do not think the point has been raised of deciding whether or not the witnesses should be paid.

As I said this morning, if we begin this procedure, which is distinctly a new one, while these gentlemen are very knowledgeable and may speak about very special business interest, I can see where every section of this country, within provinces—true, there are always disagreements within provinces—is going to put forth the considerations of those areas or regions. I do not see how this can be entertained.

Mr. MCPHILLIPS: I agree. I think we would get into a terrible state if every member simply wanted this person or that person summoned. I may be wrong, but I do think that this is a result of the railway rates case and that we do not need any expert testimony on that. Arrangements were made for the witnesses who are appearing here. Surely we do not need expert witnesses on freight rates.

Mr. CHEVRIER: Why did you not move this morning for the exclusion of witnesses?

Mr. BADANAI: It stems from the factor that northwestern Ontario is completely isolated due to the province of Ontario failing to oppose the increase in freight rates. Therefore we are in a special category and should be considered.