

expressing it. When these things were done by the Laurier Government, my hon. friend and his friends were the most severe critics. Now my hon. friend shields himself behind what was done by the Laurier Government.

Hon. Mr. REID: We were always glad to support everything that we thought was in the interest of the country. In this particular case, I supported the Bill creating the Board of Railway Commissioners. I remember when the Bill came in, and I am glad that at that time my hon. friend and myself agreed.

Mr. CANNON: A few months ago the commercial interests of the city of Quebec, after having tried for a long time, succeeded in having the Railway Commission visit our city so that the representatives of the Government and the commercial people of Quebec might discuss before the Railway Commission the improvement of the railway situation at large. If I am not mistaken, it was understood at that time that the discussion was to take place between representatives of the Government and these interested parties. Much to the surprise of the public in general and especially of the commercial interests, the Canadian Pacific railway was very largely represented through attorneys and otherwise, and most of the discussion took place through the representatives of the Canadian Pacific. The whole situation was reviewed; the Railway Commission apparently took a very keen interest in the debates which took place, but since then we have never heard a word from the commission. No decision of any kind has been rendered, and the situation remains in exactly the same position as it was then. The minister, earlier in the afternoon, in answer to a question, told me that he had no control over this commission in the way of changing its decisions or anything of that sort; but I would be very anxious to accept the friendly offers, made by the minister frequently while he is passing his Estimates, to do whatever he can for us on this side of the House. About half an hour ago he offered my deskmate, the hon. member for Quebec West (Mr. Parent) to send a note to the Canadian National railways to try to settle up a difficulty which existed in my hon. friend's constituency. I should be glad if the great influence of the minister could be brought to bear upon the Railway Commission, so that we might get some decision and that the Quebec people might know, some time before the

[Mr. Fielding.]

end of the year, if possible, exactly where we stand. That would be only fair, especially when we see by the item before the committee the enormous amount of money which is spent every year to pay for the Railway Commission and the staff, in order that it may give proper service and satisfaction to the people. What is the use of having a commission and going to all the trouble which was gone to in the city of Quebec, by both the Railway Commission and the people at large, if, after a hearing of that importance, no decision is rendered?

Hon. Mr. REID: I shall bring the matter to the attention of the Chairman of the Board of Railway Commissioners and ask him what the situation is in connection with the matter which the hon. member has mentioned. As I stated, decisions of the Board of Railway Commissioners are made entirely independent of the department. I will get a reply from the chairman as to exactly what the situation is in connection with the matter and will let the hon. member know.

Mr. PARENT: Just this morning I heard a committee member from British Columbia state that when they wanted members of the board to go and study questions in their part of the country, they could never get them to go to that province. Representatives from British Columbia have to travel to Ottawa in order to appear before the commission. Is there any way in which the commission can be compelled to visit a province like British Columbia?

Hon. Mr. REID: I do not know that there is any way in which we can compel them to go. I do not know whether there is anything in the Act to force them to go to any particular part of the country; but I have always found that if any matter is of great or sufficient importance, the commission will go to any part of Canada. They do go through all parts of Canada. They have, as the hon. member knows, officials whom they send to any place where there is a complaint and where it is necessary that some one should go. I would hardly think that if a case were put up to them where the commission should go and attend personally to a matter, they would not go. If the hon. member has any case of sufficient importance that he thinks they should have gone, and they did not go, I should be very glad to bring it to the attention of the