

Q. Major Bell did not say that, and you are relying on his memory altogether in connection with it. Now, do you want, in view of the fact that you could not tell us about this yourself, to add to what Major Bell has said the fact that the Board authorized the purchase of property as against leasing?—A. On May 21st, at the Board meeting, the general policy of acquiring a property in Paris for the purposes named was discussed and approved.

Q. You put it now as "acquiring"?—A. I did not put it that way at all.

Q. You certainly said so a moment ago, but there is still room for change.—A. No, it is exactly as I think I put it to you, that the general policy was discussed at the May Board meeting which, if I remember rightly, would be on May 21st. That was a discussion with respect to the general policy, and the policy of acquiring suitable office quarters either by purchase or otherwise was discussed at that time. (To Major Bell) Is that right?

Major BELL: I think it was the month before, in April.

The WITNESS: We can easily refer to the minutes of the Board, and determine when it was.

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: I have the other minutes of the Board, and I cannot find any minute of the Board with the interview of which you speak. It is not here.

Major BELL: I doubt if it would be a minute of the Board.

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: I have not much doubt about it either.

Q. So the acquisition of the property, as you now put it, could either be by lease or purchase?—A. That is my recollection of the discussion.

Q. Very well, we will go on.

"There has been abundant evidence that our inactivity abroad was losing us a certain amount of business, and you may recall for example, the statement made recently on the floor of the House by an honourable member, complaining that the Canadian National Railway System was unknown in Europe.

"One of the essential implements, on the solicitation of business as well as for the purpose of advertising the Dominion of Canada as a whole, is proper quarters at strategic European points. We are already properly housed in London, but we have no quarters on the continent, I therefore considered it necessary to secure offices of sufficient prominence to meet our requirements in that territory."

Mr. KYTE: What are you reading from there?

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: A letter of the 31st of May addressed to the Minister.

Q. "*Early in this month*, an opportunity developed to secure a property at the corner of Rue Scribe and the Boulevard des Capucins, close to the Place de l'Opera, and in the centre of the banking and transportation district; briefly it may be said that this location is in the very heart of the city". I think it is only fair to draw the point out that if this file is correct this letter is not true—A. In what respect?

Q. —and give you every opportunity of changing it. As a matter of fact the file says that on the 9th of April the opportunity developed to secure this property, while the letter says, "*Early in this month*" the opportunity developed. Both cannot be true.—A. I do not quite see the point.

Q. No, it is only a question of veracity, that is all; which is true? There is no point which I am making at all; I am trying to get the facts and nothing else.—A. Yes.

Q. The file says that on the 9th of April you had the opportunity to secure this property. On the 31st of May you write to this effect, "*Early in this month* the opportunity developed to secure this property". Which is true?—A. I do not think there is any conflict, unless one wants to play upon terms. The matter was first brought to my attention as has already been developed. The first oppor-

[Sir Henry Thornton.]