

Railway Act

opposition who have spoken have indicated that they intend to vote against this, and the only way you can vote against a resolution is to call a vote. If they are going to call a vote I feel it to be my duty as a member of the committee to say why I am going to vote for the resolution.

I heard the discussion that brought about the amendment which led up to this resolution. I disagree with my respected friend, the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra (Mr. Green), when he says no argument was presented to the committee to justify the proposed increases. Perhaps I should be the last one to say this, but in my opinion this resolution is aimed at removing a discrimination. I feel strongly on that point. The official opposition voted against an amendment proposed by me in committee; and in that the personnel which will share in these increases are all members of the legal profession and—

An hon. Member: No.

Mr. Gillis: Just a minute. When the bill was under discussion we objected to the provision that the commissioner, the assistant commissioners and the members of the board must be members of the legal profession with at least ten years of practice.

Mr. Green: On a point of order, I am sure the hon. member for Cape Breton South (Mr. Gillis) would not want to make a mistake if he had the necessary knowledge. It is not provided that the ordinary members of the board must be barristers.

Mr. Gillis: Just a minute.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Beaudoin): The hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra (Mr. Green) must not interrupt the hon. member who has the floor without his consent. The hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra did not raise a point of order; he merely explained a point, and that should be done after the hon. member who has the floor has concluded his remarks.

Mr. Gillis: I am always pleased when those with whom I am arguing get excited enough to get up as that is a clear indication that my argument is having effect. The chief commissioner and the assistant chief commissioner must be members of the legal profession with outstanding qualifications.

Mr. Green: Now you are right.

Mr. Gillis: We said that should not be so. We wanted to know why men from the trade union movement possessing the necessary qualifications could not be appointed. Why should not some outstanding economists be appointed? Running a railroad is an economic

[Mr. Gillis.]

proposition. However, we lost; and we bowed to the will of the majority in the committee. The hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra and other members of the opposition insisted that they must be members of the legal profession.

This brings up the question of remuneration for their services. In the past year or so we have increased substantially the pension rights and salaries of the members of the judiciary, and I submit that we should not have discrimination against the legal profession in this legislation. Why should we ask men with outstanding qualifications to give public service on this board for ten or fifteen years, and then when they are through find themselves on the beach? I think there is every justification for removing that discrimination by bringing the salaries of the members of the board of transport commissioners in line with the salaries and pension rights of members of the judiciary. Every reasonable argument with respect to removing the discrimination went through my mind, and I was quite prepared to see the salaries increased to the extent proposed in the committee and now contained in an amendment to the bill. It is removing a discrimination against the profession to which the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra (Mr. Green) belongs. I am always prepared to do that kind of thing. In the second place, I have heard arguments advanced on a good many occasions in the house against increasing the salaries and pensions of members of the judiciary, and the hon. member for Greenwood (Mr. Macdonnell) and other members have risen and waxed very eloquent about it. They said that if we were going to get responsible men with high qualifications we had to remunerate them sufficiently so they would be available for appointment to these very important positions.

I consider the board of transport commissioners just as important a body as any court in this country. They deal with more complicated problems than merely deciding whether or not someone should go to jail. In fact they have much to do with the whole economic future of the Dominion of Canada. So far as I am concerned they have had no increase in remuneration since 1947, and since that time there have been many changes in the structure of prices and so on. I am making my decision to support the resolution on the ground that we are removing a discrimination between equally qualified personnel on the board of transport commissioners and those who occupy high offices in the judiciary in this country.

Mr. Solon E. Low (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, the royal commission on transportation recommended the strengthening of the