

any examination of the documents which have to be considered in cases of pardon. I do not know how much of his time that would take, but I do not suppose that it would take a very large portion of the year. I do not object to the employment of men who are specially capable of dealing with the particular questions that come before the Board of Railway Commissioners. I admit that that might be necessary in some cases; but I think that in the large majority of cases that come before the board the special services of such counsel would not be required. While legal work is becoming more or less specialized in this country, still the very ablest lawyers in any part of Canada engage in work of a very diversified character. I venture to say that the gentleman, whoever he may be, who is employed by the government in connection with cases before the Board of Railway Commissioners during the past year is one who practises in all the courts, whether in the first instance, on appeal at nisi prius, or otherwise; and if he is able to do that, the Solicitor General, whose ability I am not depreciating in any way, should be able to do it also. In fact, it is because I believe the Solicitor General could attend to this work that I am urging on the government that he should be assigned to it. If he were assigned to it, there would be greater continuity in the system of the department. If he had not the requisite experience in the first instance, he would very soon acquire it. I think it is undesirable that so important an officer as the Solicitor General necessarily is under our system of government, occupying the position of one of the law officers of the Crown, should not be employed in work of this kind, instead of confiding it altogether to persons entirely outside of the departments of the government.

Mr. J. D. REID. I quite understand that it would be unfair to expect the Minister of Justice to do all this work; but I thought that he might be able to argue some special cases. I can quite understand, from what the leader of the opposition has said, that the Solicitor General could not be expected to do this work. But take a case such as this one, in which two men were employed—Mr. Shepley at \$50 per day, and Mr. Buell, of Brockville, at \$30 per day. I am not questioning the amount paid, but it strikes me that the Solicitor General would be able to fill the place of either one or the other. And if it were a case requiring an expert like Mr. Shepley, my hon. friend could have his assistance. Yet in every case before the Railway Commission, you will find two lawyers acting on behalf of the government. It seems to me that the Solicitor General should take up all these cases that are right here in Ottawa. There are cases before the Exchequer Court which he should argue, and I am quite satisfied he

would be capable of handling them. In the Justice Department, there are officials to whom are assigned special duties, as the right hon. the First Minister has said. There is one who looks after these petitions for pardon and another who has another branch in his charge. These matters may have to pass to the Solicitor General and then to the deputy minister, but it does appear to me that for such work as the First Minister has described, mere office work, the men of the department are well qualified. I think that the Solicitor General could be of valuable service to this country if in the future he would deal with these cases of the government before the Board of Railway Commissioners and engage outside assistance when necessary. But I do not think it is fair to the country that the office of the Solicitor General should be allowed to go on in the way it has been going during the last few years. I am not saying that the Solicitor General has not been doing sufficient work for the salary he gets, but there could be some change.

Mr. MONK. Judging by the way in which the Solicitor General is employed now, it would be quite reasonable to abolish the office. Not only before the Board of Railway Commissioners but in other cases in the Exchequer Court, we find that the Solicitor General, although quite competent to appear and defend our rights, is always replaced by some political friend of the government in the locality where the case originated. I have seen quite recently a marked instance of that. We had some five or six barges wintering in the Lachine canal they were injured in the spring when the water was taken out of the canal in order to make repairs, and it seems to me that we were not responsible. These barges are allowed to winter in the canal and are supposed to be left in charge of some one who sees to their protection. At any rate they were slightly injured. It seems to me that the claimants for damages in these cases might have been induced to consent to a test case before the Exchequer Court. They were, however, as many cases taken out against the Crown as there were barges damaged, and it was not the Solicitor General, but a lawyer from Montreal, who appeared on behalf of the Crown. And if you look at the issue, because the Crown was condemned to pay damages, you will find that we paid more in costs than we did in damages. Those cases that come before the Exchequer Court are cases in which my hon. friend the Solicitor General, should appear, yet in very few cases in which a petition of right is allowed—in fact I venture to say none—does my hon. friend appear. Under the circumstances, we are paying a very considerable amount for that department; and if the principle laid down by my right hon. friend is right, if we re-