

Canadian National-Canadian Pacific Bill
Inquiry—Expenses of Witnesses

Hon. Mr. Horsey inquired of the government: Whether any expenses were incurred by the government for the payment of the expenses of witnesses who appeared before the Senate railway committee on Bill A, and, if so, what was the total amount paid therefor?

Right Hon. Mr. Meighen: No expenses were incurred for payment of witnesses.

Mark you, Mr. Chairman, this answer is of the utmost importance, as it illuminates the whole matter. I shall repeat it.

Right Hon. Mr. Meighen: No expenses were incurred for payment of witnesses.

This question and answer is to be found at page 445 of the official report of the debates of the Senate. I protest strongly, Mr. Chairman, against the bill being submitted to the committee of the whole house, and I expressed a similar protest upon the second reading of the bill. It is impossible for any hon. member to give a clear decision or to make a clear judgment concerning unknown facts. True, the minister has said that the commissioners travelled from ocean to ocean, and gathered an immense amount of evidence, with which they are satisfied. When the bill was originally brought to the Senate it was such a bad piece of legislation that the leader of the government in the Senate, the Right Hon. Arthur Meighen, refused to accept responsibility for it. Senators had the opportunity and the advantage of hearing witnesses in the Senate committee. Many witnesses were called, among others Mr. Beatty and Mr. Hungerford. They gave evidence which to a certain extent changed or transformed the bill. I state now that the matter cannot be properly considered in its present form, and that it should be studied carefully by a special committee of the whole house, a committee which has existed since confederation for the purpose of examining such matters. In that way any hon. members on the committee would have an opportunity to hear witnesses in connection with any point upon which they wished to base a judgment.

Now, sir, this bill is submitted to this committee. The statement made by the hon. Minister of Railways and Canals during his speech on March 7, when he moved the second reading of this bill was that in order to save expense and trouble we should study it here without hearing any witnesses. This is most startling. What is the expense? The leader of the government in the Senate says there is no expense in calling these witnesses. I understand it is a great honour for Mr. Beatty, Mr. Hungerford, Mr. Ruel and others to appear before a committee of the Senate. I do not know if they feel that it is such an honour

to appear before a committee of the House of Commons. That bill should have been moved first before the House of Commons. It came before the Senate first because the government had no other legislation ready to give to the Senate to examine, while we were discussing other matters in the House of Commons.

Now, sir, to show the committee, and prove to the minister himself, that it is absurd to go on with the study of this bill without hearing other witnesses, I will ask him the following questions:

How many superintendents and assistant superintendents, first on the Canadian National Railways, second on the Canadian Pacific Railway, are civil engineers?

How many officers earning \$2,500 or more a year in the offices or management of both railways were there in 1930, in 1931, and in 1932?

How many of them were dismissed each year?

How many of them are there this year, 1933?

How many of them have been dismissed since the beginning of the year?

On the other hand, how many men earning \$2,500 or less have been in the employ of the Canadian National Railways, and in the employ of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, and how many of them have been set back in both railways for the same periods I have mentioned, in 1930, in 1931, in 1932 and since the beginning of 1933?

And if the hon. minister is kind enough to answer these questions I will be glad to ask him some more.

Mr. MANION: Mr. Chairman, in regard to one matter which the hon. gentleman mentioned, that of the expense of bringing witnesses before a House of Commons committee, I did not emphasize that feature as much as he has emphasized it; I merely mentioned it as incidental. I pointed out that the witnesses had been heard before the royal commission and before the Senate committee, and that the evidence as given by these witnesses was, to a large extent, open to perusal of hon. members of this house and therefore was not necessary to repeat it. Mr. Hungerford and Mr. Beatty both appeared before the royal commission, Mr. Beatty appeared before the Senate committee, Mr. Hungerford took the attitude that his evidence had already been given before the commission and it was unnecessary to repeat it because there was no change in it. That was the point, the expense was incidental.

In regard to the dismissal of various employees of the two railways, I do not know