

has wide knowledge and experience; his responsibilities and duties are similar to those of the English secretary, and I do not see why his salary should not be the same as that paid to Mr. Cartwright. I hope the minister will see that these salaries are put on the same basis.

Hon. Mr. REID: Possibly Mr. Primeau's salary has been increased by the classification. Of course, this matter is out of the hands of the department; it is dealt with by the Civil Service Commission.

Mr. CANNON: Does Mr. Nantel sit with the Railway Commission now?

Hon. Mr. REID: Oh, yes, he works hard every day.

Mr. ROSS: I understand that there is a vacancy on the board. Is it the intention of the Government to fill that vacancy, or is it not thought that five commissioners are sufficient to do all the work which comes before the board?

Hon. Mr. REID: I would have to consider that.

Mr. ROSS: Has the Cabinet considered it?

Hon. Mr. REID: We have been very busy with these Estimates.

Mr. ROSS: This is a very important matter. There used to be seven members on this board, I understand.

Hon. Mr. REID: I think the number is six now. There is a vacancy at present.

Mr. ROSS: I want just a straight answer from the minister if they have considered the matter.

Hon. Mr. REID: We have not considered the matter up to the present time.

Mr. ROSS: Does the minister think it is necessary to fill the vacancy?

Hon. Mr. REID: If I did not think it was necessary, I would not have it filled.

Mr. ROSS: I do not believe the people of this country think it is necessary to fill the vacancy. There is not work for six commissioners, and it is an unnecessary expense to impose on the country to have six commissioners when there is not work for six. With the heavy debt with which this country is burdened, that is one of the expenditures which it might be wise to cut down.

Hon. Mr. REID: The hon. member was one of those who supported the appoint-

ment of six commissioners. This commission was created under the previous Government. I can only give my opinion for what it is worth; my opinion—and it is just as strong as that of the hon. member—is that there should be six men on that commission. Therefore, I say that the naming of six men originally was in the interest of the country.

Mr. ROSS: I have great respect for the minister's opinion, and I always have had; but to say that, because six men were appointed originally, when the work of the commission was in its initial stages and it was getting organized, and making new rules, and when there may have been work for six men, six men are necessary to do the work now when a great deal of the work has become routine work, is not very sound argument. My contention is that there is not work on the commission now for six men, and in the interest of economy this vacancy should not be filled.

Mr. FIELDING: How and when did the vacancy occur?

Hon. Mr. REID: Mr. Goodeve, one of the members, died some months ago, I do not know the date.

Mr. FIELDING: If the commission has been able to get along with five members, and there is no urgency about the matter, the hon. member for Middlesex (Mr. Ross) would have some ground for saying that the additional member is not necessary.

Hon. Mr. REID: The hon. member, (Mr. Fielding) during the years while he was in office, I suppose, had many cases where a vacancy in a court remained unfilled for months and yet the work was carried on. Other judges may have had to work a little harder, and the same is probably true in this case.

Mr. FIELDING: The minister is not very happy in his illustration. The courts are determined by the provincial legislatures which determine the number of judges.

Hon. Mr. REID: The hon. member knows that the Government at Ottawa fills the vacancy.

Mr. FIELDING: But the number is decided by the Provincial Government, and the Government at Ottawa have nothing to do with the number. I am glad of the admiration which the minister expresses for what was done by the Laurier Government, although he is a little late in