

Supply—Privy Council

that we are not going to come to any practical solution from this royal commission on the real problem that we face at the present time.

I do not wish to take up any more time on this matter, but I should just like to point out to all hon. members of the committee that we are going to be faced with a crisis period when we get back here after Easter, and it will concern transportation problems. What always happens, and what I am afraid of, is that when the threat of a strike hangs over the country the people who are going to get it in the neck are the railway workers, because the antipathy to strikes as a whole hides the fact that the railway workers have a real case for an adjustment in their wage rates.

I think this fact needs to be pointed out. I hope the railway workers themselves will tighten up their discipline, and improve their solidarity and will be prepared to face a strike on May 15, despite the fact that in the crisis period after we return we will go into these problems and there is no doubt that public opinion will be worked up so as to place railway workers in an invidious position.

I am sorry to have spoken so long, Mr. Chairman, but it seems to me we are going to land back here with a really big problem in our laps, and I think the people who are going to take the real kicking on it—and we should have sympathy and consideration for them—are the railway workers, largely as a result of an inactive and ineffective government policy on railways.

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Chairman, I do not wish to hold up this matter, but I have one final observation to make. The hon. member who has just spoken has said that unless this problem of transportation which faces us is solved shortly we will indeed be facing a major crisis, because the deadline date is May 15 and we will soon be in April.

We on this side of the chamber are not belabouring the royal commission, as my hon. friend the Minister of Finance suggests, it is the government which has burdened the royal commission with certain responsibilities related to this labour dispute. These are responsibilities which the royal commission certainly did not anticipate when it was set up. This has been done by the government itself in connection with the dispute of last autumn, which was temporarily settled, but only temporarily, by legislation.

During the discussion of that legislation the Prime Minister himself said that all that was being done was to postpone the strike, and no rights were being denied anybody.

In the discussion on November 30 the Prime Minister is reported as having said:

There is a postponement—

It is only a postponement—

—because of the action of the government to preserve the equality of all parts of Canada—

That is, with respect to freight rates:

—until equalization has been provided for as a result of the recommendations of the royal commission.

There it is. The royal commission has been given that responsibility. We are entitled to ask, and we do ask whether in this first report—it may be the only report before May 15, in all likelihood it will be the only report made before that date—recommendations will be made, as stated by the Prime Minister, to provide for equality of all parts of Canada. If that is not the case, then how is this matter going to be provided for, as the Prime Minister said it would be provided for, before the date of May 15 after which, if no solution is found meanwhile, a strike can take place?

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): I cannot say what will be the precise contents of the report. It will be received in due course, as the Prime Minister has indicated. I think that would be the proper time, when all hon. members have the report and have perused it, to discuss the contents of the report and whatever recommendations it may contain.

Item agreed to.

722. Expenses of the royal commission on the Great Slave Lake Railway—further amount required, \$2,150.

Mr. Pearson: I wonder whether the minister would give us some information about the work of this royal commission on the Great Slave Lake Railway for which we are asked to make a further appropriation? Is this work completed?

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Yes, the work is completed and this small sum is required to pay the final accounts.

Mr. Pearson: The work then has been completed and the recommendations have been made by the royal commission, and the minister says that this item is needed to tidy up the expenses of that commission. May I ask whether any decision has been taken by the government regarding the recommendations made by that royal commission as to the route of this railroad?

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): That information will be fully given to the house in due course.

Mr. Baldwin: I would like to take just one moment to say, in respect of the recommendations, that I was up in this country just recently and am pleased to advise the committee that there is at the present time a full location survey taking place, and that