

In any event, is it in the power of our railways to exercise monopoly in a way to hurt the public? Everybody knows the companies are completely under the control of the Board of Transport Commissioners. Not a line can be abandoned, not a rail can be lifted, not a train can be cut off, not a single service can be discontinued, not a fare or rate can be increased without permission from that tribunal.

Some people say it would be a terrible shock to our population to have to live under monopoly. Yet all our communities, from ocean to ocean, are living under monopoly. My honourable friend the leader of this House (Hon. Mr. Dandurand) remembers better than I do the time when Montreal had two tramway systems, two gas companies, two electric light companies and two telephone companies, but now we have a complete monopoly in each of those instances. We were not compelled to accept the change, but we accepted it because it suited us, because we knew it promised better and cheaper service. When there were two tramway systems in Montreal, if you wanted to travel farther than one line ran, you had to buy a second ticket to travel on the other line. And in former days, if you wanted a telephone in your office or home, you had to make a choice between La Compagnie de Téléphone des Marchands and the Bell Telephone Company, and if you desired to carry on a conversation with someone who was a subscriber of the company which was not serving you, it was necessary to pay an additional charge. No one will deny that monopoly has improved the service.

In this respect Montreal is typical of all cities and towns all over the country. Our people have their meals cooked by fuel furnished by a monopoly, they subscribe to a monopolistic telephone service, and every day they ride in street cars or buses operated by another monopoly. Whatever way it is looked at, this threat of monopoly is like a harmless gas-filled bag. If you prick it, the gas escapes and the bag collapses and falls to the ground. Yet, if we are to listen to my honourable friend the leader of the House (Hon. Mr. Dandurand), we must take it that our people would feel very uneasy once they stepped on to a train which was under the control of a monopoly. For people who several times a day use a tramway under monopoly, would it be appalling once a week or month to use a railway also under monopoly? Is there anything in that view? I wave it aside.

I come now to the other alleged danger, which in my opinion is a horse of a different colour. I refer to political domination. My

honourable friend once waxed very indignant about that: he said, "We will have no political domination." Well, what is the position to-day? I shall have to ask the House to be kind enough to let me pass rapidly over part of the ground I have covered on a previous occasion.

Hon. Mr. MURDOCK: There were nine Conservatives to seven Grits on the committee. Political domination.

Hon. Mr. BEAUBIEN: I do not understand my honourable friend. Is he asking a question?

Hon. Mr. MURDOCK: I understood the honourable gentleman asked a question about the position to-day. On the committee we had nine Conservatives voting for one report, against seven Grits voting for another report.

Hon. Mr. BEAUBIEN: My honourable friend will see how stupid I am.

Hon. Mr. MURDOCK: I would not say that.

Hon. Mr. BEAUBIEN: Oh, yes, I have to admit that. I was intending to talk about political domination by the unions.

Hon. Mr. MURDOCK: I beg your pardon.

Hon. Mr. BEAUBIEN: I did not want to discuss the attitude of committee members. I simply desired to remind honourable members of something that happened last year which it seems to me will have serious consequences for the whole country. In the beginning of 1938 the railway unions insisted upon an increase of 11 per cent in wages. The Government would be expected to defend the interests of the taxpayers, to prevent any unnecessary expenditures. Well, let us see if the railway workers needed an increase. I have already cited figures given before our committee by Mr. Chase, a very intelligent gentleman, who I believe represented the running trades. He said that locomotive engineers on passenger trains—I think that was the category, though I may be wrong—received an average annual income of \$3,205, and that the average of all railway workers was \$1,550. It struck me that this second figure was a very high one in comparison with the average wage of all workers in Canada. I thought it would be fairer to make a comparison with the next privileged class of workers; so I looked at an advance report on manufacturing industries for 1937, published by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, and containing the latest figures available. As 1937 was a better year than 1938, the 1937 figures must be considered relatively high. I