

or wrong. These rules are dealt with by the head of the department in a very perfunctory manner, and they are sent to the experts of the department, and if approved, the Minister recommends them. But what I desire to remind the hon. Minister of especially, is that a deputation of trainmen waited upon me when I occupied the position of Minister of Railways. The trainmen heard that the rules were likely to be changed. They asked me, before the rules were changed or approved by the Governor in Council, to be allowed to present their opinions on the question. I gave that direct promise to the deputation—I remember it perfectly well. I sent to the head of the department, and instructed him that as regards any new rules, they should not be recommended to Council for approval until communication had taken place with the trainmen. I think in this case the trainmen should have been consulted before new rules had been put into operation.

Mr. SPROULE. There is one point worthy of consideration. The First Minister stated that no man except an expert could pass an opinion on this subject under consideration, and this was a reflection on some members of the House, especially the hon. member for West York (Mr. Wallace), who had expressed his opinion regarding them. If that is the case I submit that the parties who are best able to give the necessary information, and who are in fact experts, are the men doing the work, and they should have an opportunity of being heard before these rules are put into force. There are two objects sought to be attained in having these matters submitted for the approval of the Governor in Council. One is that they may not be lightly passed and injury done, where perhaps it was not intended to be done; and the other is that the parties interested may have notice and give their views and present their side of the question. In this case, as I have said, the operatives of the road are really the experts. The railway companies have had an opportunity of expressing their views, and so far as is disclosed in the discussion, the railway men have not had the opportunity of presenting their case. As the hon. member for Brockville stated, in these days we adjust our differences by conciliation and arbitration, and this certainly applies to differences of opinion existing between employers and employees. The great corporations lay down cast iron rules, and in these cases it is becoming more and more important that both sides should be heard before conclusions are arrived at and acted upon. Only the corporations and employers had an opportunity of presenting their views with respect to the wisdom or otherwise of some of the rules crystallized into law by Order in Council before they became law. This course should be followed in this and all other cases, and before these rules come into operation it is the duty of the Government

to withhold them for the time so as to give this large class of the community an opportunity to express their approval or disapproval to the rules, in so far as they may affect their side of the case.

The MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND CANALS (Mr. Blair). I may perhaps say one word in view of the statement made by the hon. gentleman (Mr. Haggart). I quite accept his recollection of what took place when he was Minister of Railways, and I have no doubt at all in my own mind that he is correct in that statement; but it is only fair to the deputy head, who was also the deputy under his administration, to say that he has no recollection whatever of having been asked to make any record, nor did he make any record of the request of the committee of trainmen made upon the ex-Minister of Railways. The deputy has sent me a memo. over his own signature, to the effect that there is no record whatever in the department of the railway employees having asked to be heard before any regulations or new rules should be approved. It is, therefore, quite clear that it has entirely escaped his memory as it did mine. If either of these gentlemen or any of them spoke to me on the subject I have no recollection, and in view of their statement I would be sorry to say they did not. The matter went through, as the ex-Minister of Railways has stated, quite in the usual way. I wish to be understood distinctly as by no means intending now or then to treat this matter lightly. I recognize its importance and I should be extremely well pleased at any time to afford the fullest opportunity to this body of men, or any other which may be connected with railroads, to be heard before any regulation is approved which may in the slightest degree affect their interests. I will be very glad indeed to afford every facility, as I always endeavour to do in the general discharge of the duties of my department, to any persons who wish to be heard with regard to any action which the department may take.

Mr. MONTAGUE. I do not know what took place between the late Minister of Railways and the permanent head of the department, but I think I introduced the deputation that represented the trainmen to the late Minister of Railways and Canals, and at that time it was supposed that the Grand Trunk Railway Company were about to issue new rules; indeed the deputation thought at that time that these rules had already been submitted to the Department of Railways. I remember very well the answer given by the hon. member for Lanark (Mr. Haggart), namely, that he had not yet heard of the intention of the Grand Trunk Railway to introduce new rules, but he made the promise in my presence that when the rules should be submitted to the department for approval, the committee of the trainmen would be notified and given an opportunity of presenting any objections