

public welfare. Those concerned in the operation of railways, either as proprietors or workers, are a portion of the general public. Therefore the justification for legislation of this kind in regard to railways rests entirely upon a different principle from legislation applicable to troubles between private employers and their workmen. For that reason it was deemed wise to bring forward a special Bill dealing with a special case.

My hon. friend from Jacques Cartier suggested that perhaps there was no power under the British North America Act to pass this Bill. Well, I do not think my hon. friend was serious in that observation. This Bill does not propose to affect property and civil rights in any way; it proposes to hold an investigation. Is there anything in the British North America Act to restrict us in making an inquiry into any matter or any conditions in Canada? I know of nothing.

Hon. Mr HAGGART. In other words, it is constitutional because it does not do anything?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. It is constitutional because it is not unconstitutional. It does not affect property and civil rights.

Mr. CLARKE. It is only intended to affect public opinion.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. I am not aware that public opinion is limited to a provincial legislature for its expression. My hon. friend from Jacques Cartier contended in the early part of the day that we had ample power to settle strikes, and that we should go down to Montreal this afternoon and settle the strike there. Has the British North America Act undergone any change since this afternoon? It has just the same force now as it had when the hon. gentleman was addressing the House with such force this afternoon. I think no one would argue that we have not power to issue this commission of inquiry. My hon. friend from East Elgin (Mr. Ingram) suggested that the fact of the arbitrators being paid might have a tendency to promote strikes.

Mr. INGRAM. The hon. gentleman misunderstands me. What I said was that in Australia they find that paid members of the board foment strikes and difficulties of that character for the purpose of obtaining their daily pay. I did not express my own opinion at all.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. Then I misunderstood my hon. friend. But I will point out that the objection cited by the hon. member for East Elgin could have no force here because in the New Zealand Act—the Australian Act is taken from the New Zealand Act,—there is a standing board, and therefore the arbitrators know before hand that they will be called upon

to act. In this case there is no standing board, but only an arbitration board to be chosen pro hac vice. Therefore, until a strike is threatened or commenced, there can be no person chosen and no one knows who the arbitrators will be.

Mr. INGRAM. I said if the same conditions existed in both countries the same results might follow.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. I am pointing out to my hon. friend that the law there is different; no arbitrators are appointed until the difficulty arises, and the commission is only constituted when the parties to compose the board are notified of their appointment. Mr. Speaker, I think I have reviewed the technical objections that have been taken to the measure, and I have no hesitation in inviting the House to read this Bill the second time.

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax). The hon. gentleman has mentioned the fact that the railways have extraordinary powers. I do not exactly see any connection between that fact and anything in this Bill. I would like to understand this: It is expected by the Minister of Labour, if we may judge from the illustrations he has produced to the House, that this measure will produce important results, such results as was produced in Massachusetts in settling an important strike in a period of nine days. Now, if there is any such virtue in this Bill, why should it not be applied to strikes such as that now going on in Montreal? Is there any reason to suppose that this measure will be less successful with a strike of that kind than with strikes upon railways? Is there any reason that can be suggested why the measure should not be as useful in one case as in the other? If it will produce such results, why we might have had this Montreal strike settled already, we might have had the Canada Atlantic strike settled long ago. I have not yet understood from the Minister of Labour any valid reason given why this legislation, from which he expects so much, should be restricted to railway strikes. I am not asking this for the purpose of embarrassing the minister, but only to understand what is in his mind on the subject.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. My hon. friend will see that however sanguine one is in regard to the efficacy of this measure, it must be remembered that it is only a tentative one. It was begun last year with reference to railways alone, and has been continued with respect to railways alone, because of their special character. They stand on a different footing. I stated before and I repeat it now, that we hope public opinion will favour the extension of this principle beyond the present limited scope of railways, but I doubt if public opinion in Canada to-day is sufficiently prepared to say that we should pass even