

are doing nothing at all about setting the price which a worker has to pay to General Motors for a car or to Canada Packers for a pound of bacon, or what a farmer has to pay to International Harvester for a tractor. They know that this parliament is doing nothing about the steady rise in the interest rates which workers must pay for mortgages on their homes. As a matter of fact, instead of doing nothing government authorities have pushed interest rates higher so that today the worker is paying higher interest rates than ever. It is not lost on the worker that he, along with some of the primary producers, belongs to the one group which is having the price of its labour set by someone else while those who control the economy, those in the monopolies and the combines, continue to set what ever prices they please for the products which the consumer must buy.

If this law is to be obeyed it must be a just law in the eyes of those who are affected by it. The government ought to stop and think about this measure. This parliament can pass a law but legislation will not run trains. Only men can operate trains and only men can make the railroad system work. If the government wants the men to go back to work, as we all do, surely it ought to take a little time now and re-examine this measure.

I suggest to the government that it should consult the representatives of the railway unions and be prepared to amend this legislation by setting rates which will be considered a fair minimum and asking the men to go back to work on the basis of those rates. Then the process of free collective bargaining should take place with respect to what is to be added to those rates. I see no reason for imposing compulsory arbitration. If the government would appoint an administrator to act for the railways in these negotiations, if the government would give to the men a reasonable minimum as a basis upon which to return to work, I believe the process of free, collective bargaining would produce a settlement.

I seriously doubt that an imposed settlement will produce the effect which the government desires. Furthermore, may I say to the government that the situation is not being helped by the statement which was allegedly made yesterday by Mr. Ian Sinclair, the president of the C.P.R., who is quoted in one of our more widely circulated daily newspapers as having said that if the men do not go back to work when this bill is passed they will lose their pension rights. First of all, I

Legislation Respecting Railway Matters

doubt that he has the legal right to carry out such a threat. But I suggest to the Minister of Labour (Mr. Nicholson) and to the Prime Minister that one of the first things they should do is call Mr. Sinclair and tell him that this type of arrogance is only inflaming the situation and can only incite the men to defy parliament and the law.

Mr. Turner: Would the hon. gentleman not agree that Clause 4(b) of the present bill would anticipate and prevent any such action?

Mr. Douglas: There is no need to tell me that. Tell that to the president of the C.P.R. In any event, the Minister without Portfolio (Mr. Turner)—and without many other things—is a lot closer to the president of the C.P.R. than I am, and I suggest he talk to him on the telephone, read that clause to him and tell him to “button his lip”, if we are to settle this strike peacefully.

There are other matters in dispute in addition to the matter of wages. Under this legislation all questions having to do with holidays, conditions of work, sickness benefits, vacations and job security are to be submitted to arbitration. I take strong exception to forcing workers to accept working conditions which have been imposed upon them by a tribunal of arbitration. These are things on which the workers have a right to bargain and to bargain freely without any imposition.

• (5:10 p.m.)

Lest I run over my time, Mr. Speaker, I shall interrupt what I am saying to propose an amendment to the amendment. Seconded by the hon. member for York South (Mr. Lewis) I move:

That the amendment be amended by inserting therein, immediately after the words “Freedman report”, the following words:

“by imposing compulsory arbitration, and by failing to provide for the appointment of an administrator of the railway companies so that there might be effective collective bargaining.”

I move this amendment because not only is the question of wages important but equally important are these fringe benefits and other matters which are in dispute. I refer particularly to job security. The public is not too aware of the fact that over the past ten years the number of railway employees, although they are handling more tonnage, has actually declined by some 30 per cent. Figures for the C.P.R., for instance, show that in 1957 it had