

Let us examine the matter a little more closely. What did the representatives of the men mean by saying afterwards that if the negotiations had continued a little longer a settlement might have been reached? Are they implying that the government would have "turned the heat" on Mr. Gordon and forced him to make further concessions than he thought should be made? They have no right to suggest any such thing. Mr. Gordon's action proves that once he had come to a final decision he could not be argued out of it. On the other hand, do they mean to imply that if Mr. Gordon had waited a little longer they might have changed their minds? The men can only mean one or other of these things. Do the union leaders want the public to believe they might have backed down a little from their demands if Mr. Gordon had played with them for another hour or so? These men are not children. There was nothing to prevent them from saying, "Mr. Gordon, although we have already conceded as much as we thought was possible, we feel that the negotiations had better not be broken off yet, for we have something else to suggest." If that was what they had in their minds, why did they not say so? But if they had no intention of conceding anything further, what was the use of palavering two or three hours more?

This charge that the negotiations were broken off too soon does not make sense, and I think that one of the most unfortunate occurrences in recent days was the complaint made by the leader of the CCF against Mr. Gordon. Through that complaint, which was based on an inaccurate *ex parte* statement, an attempt was made to destroy the usefulness of Mr. Gordon as president of our great publically owned railway. Honourable senators, you and I all know Donald Gordon. We saw him at work here during the critical days of the war. He brought into the fight for Canada an intelligent grasp of economic conditions, a vigour and a conscientiousness unexcelled by those of any man in Canada or the United States. I express my tribute to Arthur Smith, an honourable member of another place, a lawyer from Calgary, a Conservative, and a gentleman with a strong sense of fair play, who deplored attacks made on a man in a forum where he was unable to answer. Another honourable gentleman whom I wish to mention is Mr. Gillis, from Cape Breton. I have never had the honour of meeting him, but time and again I have been impressed by his speeches. Of course I disagree entirely with his political views, but I regard him as one of the brainy members of the House of Commons, and I am glad to see that in this

issue he was not carried away by the prejudice exhibited by his leader. A newspaper report before me states:

Clarie Gillis (CCF—Cape Breton South) said he was disappointed in Mr. Gordon if reports of his conduct were true,—

He did not say they were true.

—but he suspected that the whole story might not be known.

Of course the whole story was not known. Mr. Gordon, a government appointee, could not tell the story; but fortunately it has been told by an impartial observer, a man of high standing and great responsibility, the President of the Canadian Pacific Railway, Mr. W. A. Mather. I believe that everyone here who knows him and who knows Donald Gordon is convinced beyond doubt that in the negotiations with the union leaders Donald Gordon acted, as his conscience and intellect directed him, solely in the interests of the Canadian people.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. Farris: I was pleased by the Prime Minister's statement that the government had complete confidence in Mr. Gordon. And notwithstanding the unfair attacks that have been made, I am sure that Mr. Gordon will continue to serve the Canadian National Railways system and its employees—for in the last analysis the interest of the system and the workers are identical.

I wish now to quote from a report that appeared in the *Ottawa Citizen* a day or so ago. It refers to a charge made by the Allied Trades and Labour Association—in Ottawa, I take it. The report says:

The association charged there might never have been a nation-wide tie-up of the railways, had Mr. Gordon's attitude during negotiations been marked by the friendly spirit essential to dealings with such an issue.

I submit to honourable senators that that is not a reflection on Donald Gordon, but that it is a strong reflection on the labour leaders themselves. For surely it is a terrible thing to suggest that they threw this country into chaos, not because there was a real dispute but because they did not like the way Donald Gordon handled negotiations! Are we to believe that these men are as temperamental as prima donnas, who would so resent any suspected slighting of themselves as to have no regard for the consequences of any retaliatory action they might take?

I am sorry to have spoken so long.

Some Hon. Senators: Go ahead.

Hon. Mr. Farris: You will be glad to know that I have come to the last of my collection of reasons why the strike was not justified.