

Hon. Mr. Hayden: Let me finish. I enjoy my honourable friend's interruptions, but I wish he would let me answer one question at a time. For more than forty years we have had on the statute books of Canada the Industrial Disputes Investigation Act and the Conciliation and Labour Act. But a study of these statutes will show that although there is machinery that may be set in motion if, for instance, a municipality is likely to be injured because of a threatened strike among railway employees, and although there is provision for the setting up of a board of conciliation and, in the event that the board's recommendation is not acceptable to the parties, for the appointment of a board of arbitration with power to hear witnesses and make recommendations to the minister. Nowhere is the force of law given to the decision of either the board of conciliation or the board of arbitration unless that decision is agreed to voluntarily by the parties. So I say that there is at present no law that would authorize the government to bring about a termination of the existing strike. The Prime Minister of Canada, with all the dignity and responsibility attaching to his office, requested that negotiations be continued for thirty days in order to see whether it was possible to work out a compromise agreement, and I consider that when this request was declined the time for action by parliament had come. And as I see it we are here now in the interest of the people of Canada as a whole.

Hon. Mr. Horner: May I ask the honourable gentleman why the government did not use the War Measures Act, which is still in force?

Hon. Mr. Hayden: Of course, I cannot speak for the government. I may say, though, that I remember that after the war was over my honourable friend and other senators, of whom I was one, criticized the government for daring to carry on under the powers given to it by the War Measures Act.

Hon. Mr. Horner: Then why was the Act not withdrawn? The government kept it in force in order to deal with an emergency, and when an emergency arose the Act was not used.

Some Hon. Senators: Question!

Hon. Arthur W. Roebuck: Honourable senators, I have no desire to prolong the debate and I do not propose to do so, but I have been so long associated with labour unions, and particularly with railroad labour unions, that I cannot permit this occasion to pass without one word at least as to my own position in the matter. And while I regret delaying the house to this extent, I feel that I must do so.

My vote in favour of the measure may perhaps be interpreted by some of my friends

on both sides of the dispute as an indication that I like the bill, but I want to say publicly and plainly that I do not. In that opinion I think I am not alone, for I believe that no one in this house likes the measure. I certainly dislike it. Argue as you will, it has the element of compulsion in it. But, honourable senators, I agree with the senator from Toronto (Hon. Mr. Hayden) that at the time the negotiations broke down there was no law which gave the government power to order the railroads to continue operating. To the course that has been taken there was just one alternative, and that was to grant the employees' demands to a sufficient degree to keep the wheels turning. My own view—and I have no objection to any one's disagreement with it—is that this is what should have been done.

Hon. Mr. Hayden: That may still happen.

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: It may still happen. I am sorry that we are here. I think the demands of the employees were moderate. The wages paid to the men on strike are low, although the general opinion seems to be that they are high. Many maintenance men on rights of way are being paid today as little as 65 cents an hour, and you and I know that no man can live and keep a family on that wage. In the past the wages of our railway men, or of some of them, used to be the highest in the country, but today that is no longer so. I have been told that at one time the engineers—they are not on strike—were up in the first, second or third category of Canadian industrial wage earners, but that today they are in about the twenty-seventh.

The men who are now on strike are poorly paid and their demands are not exorbitant. Moreover, I think it is foolish to say that the economy of Canada could not carry the financial burden of paying these men at least what they ask. I would point out that in the past five years the Dominion of Canada has spent some \$9 billion in capital goods, including houses. As the honourable leader opposite (Hon. Mr. Haig) has said, increases in railway wages might have necessitated a redistribution of the burden in some way. My opinion is that the demands of the workers should have been met, at least to such an extent as to keep the wheels turning.

I can see no good purposes in the criticisms that have already been voiced, or in my adding to them.

Hon. Mr. Horner: Then why do you not quit?

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: The honourable gentleman did not quit when he was invited to do so.