

I wish to ask the Minister of Railways is this: Has he any knowledge of this matter; has the movement by any chance been instituted by the government and, if not, will the government use its best endeavours to see that it is not put into effect?

Hon. R. J. MANION (Minister of Railways): My hon. friend no doubt knows that the government has nothing whatever to do with the taking-on or laying-off of men by the Canadian National Railways; that is an entirely administrative function of the management over which we have no control. I have been carrying around in my pocket for the past few days a telegram which I sent to Winnipeg with reference to the matter. This telegram explains our position. While my hon. friend was putting his question I took the telegram out of my pocket and perhaps it might be well to read it in order to put our position before this house and the country:

Regarding your inquiry as to rumoured lay-off of men in Canadian National shops I assure you this matter has been giving myself and my colleagues grave concern. Conferences have been held with the Canadian National management—

That is, by myself.

—who are by act of parliament in complete control of administration of the railways, including, of course, all dealings with the employees and their unions. The management agreed to keep as many men at work as possible considering the continually decreasing earnings of the railways, and they have been discussing the whole matter for some days in Montreal with the representatives of the men with whom they have agreements.

This was sent some days ago when the conferences were on.

Management assure me that they have cut down the proposed temporary layoff very materially, in fact to absolute minimum because of fact that men agreed to lessened time per week spread out over the employees in the shops. They state that they have kept on the maximum number of men for whom they have any work whatsoever to do. In this regard the management tell me that the representatives of the men's unions insist on seniority prevailing according to their agreements. Management inform me they are putting out complete explanatory statement through press to-day or Monday.

That was on Friday, and on Saturday they did put out a statement. It appeared in the press, but in some papers it was merely a synopsis, while in others it was complete. There came to my office to-day, with reference to this matter, some returned soldiers from Winnipeg, and I directed them to the management at Montreal, whom I requested to give these men an interview and to give their

representations every consideration, because I thought they had a good case. This is a matter which is entirely in the hands of the management and not under our control, and while, as Minister of Railways, I have endeavoured to have the management handle the situation as carefully as possible, in view of unemployment conditions, the management ultimately are in a position to do exactly as they see fit.

SUPPLY—UNEMPLOYMENT

AMENDMENT TO MOTION OF MINISTER OF JUSTICE

The house resumed from March 1, consideration of the motion of Mr. Guthrie for committee of supply, and the amendment thereto of Mr. Heenan.

Mr. F. R. MacMILLAN (Saskatoon): When the house rose at eleven o'clock on March 1, I was directing my attention to the motion now before the house. I was explaining to the house how timber permits had been given to a firm in Prince Albert, friends of the right hon. gentleman. I stated that in all some sixty-four permits had been given by the late government to this firm, in each instance the timber being listed as fire-killed. The regulations provide that fire-killed timber pays only 50 per cent of the royalty paid for standing green timber. I was reading into the record certain information which had come to me, and I shall continue with my quotations. I hold in my hand an affidavit made at St. Walburg on March 10, 1931, by Alex. Wilson of Glenbogie, a farmer. It reads as follows:

I am a farmer residing at Glenbogie and have been employed during the past two years in taking out railway ties for Hett & Sibbald Limited, and have personal knowledge of the matters herein deposed to.

That none of the railway ties removed by me for the above mentioned Hett & Sibbald Limited were fire-killed jack pine ties.

That all the said jack pine railway ties were green and were made from green timber.

That all dues charged to me by the said Hett & Sibbald Limited, for all ties made and delivered by me were at the rate of five cents per tie, whether grading number three, number two or number one.

I received the following letter dated March 24, 1931, from Mr. I. N. Cave of St. Walburg. It reads:

Pursuant to your request for information concerning the operations of Hett & Sibbald in the timber areas north of St. Walburg, I am pleased to give the following information:

I am a timber cruiser and tie operator during the past three years and have had con-