

don't you carry it out?" He said it was impossible for them to do so, and he returned home and issued a circular setting forth very elaborately the reasons of the company for refusing to accept the award. I saw the copy of this circular and wrote him that he would no doubt be coming to Parliament next session with some Bills and said that it would be very difficult for me to support them unless the company carried out the award. Just as soon as the wires could bring a message from the headquarters of that railway company, I got a wire saying "We have adopted the award."

We had a similar case with the Grand Trunk Pacific. There is no legal means of enforcing these awards so far as I know, but there has been no case where employers have refused to carry out an award that at the very first opportunity I did not use all the pressure I could bring to bear to induce them to accept the award. I do not think there has been a single case of that kind in which our influence has not been effective. I hope now that my hon. friend will think over his logic again, and see how it limps when he says that the wage earners of the country when the Act was new refused to accept the awards made by the board of conciliation while the employers adopted them, not in every case, of course, and that later under our administration the men had become so satisfied with the administration of the Act and the awards made that they were now accepting them in greater numbers than ever before, and my hon. friend then comes to the conclusion, so limp is his logic, that it is evident the wage earners of this country are becoming dissatisfied with the operation of the Act.

I have a few letters which I will not read to-night, as I may have another opportunity, from the leading labour men of this country, who are absolutely satisfied with the administration of the Act. There were some complaints before I was placed in charge of the Labour Department, about the delay in establishing boards after an application had been made. I gave instructions that there should be no unnecessary delay with the result that during the first year of our administration of the Act the number of days that elapsed between the receipt of an application and the granting of a board was reduced from fifteen to seven on an average. In the first year during which I had the honour to administer this Act there were a million days less of lost time by reason of

[Mr. Crothers.]

strikes than there had been the year before. At \$2 a day, that means \$2,000,000 saved in wages. But one year might not be considered a very fair basis of judgment. Take the whole time the Act had been in force before I was placed in charge of the department, four years, and compare with that the five years since I was placed in charge. The number of days of lost time since I took charge has been about half a million less every year on the average than during the four years before. This is a saving of \$4,000,000. Add to this the \$2,000,000 already referred to and you have a total of \$6,000,000 saved to the wage earners of this country by the avoidance of strikes and lost days. The hon. gentleman says that the Trades and Labour Congress voted to repeal this Act. That is so. But they started in to do that before we came into power. In Calgary, not very far from where the hon. gentleman lives, the annual convention of the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada was held in 1911—before we came into power—and voted in favour of repealing this Act. Does it follow from that that there is anything wrong with the Act itself or with the administration of it? I am not here to criticise my predecessor—we are on the best of terms—and I think it is no evidence at all of any defect in the Act or in its administration by my predecessors that such a vote was passed by the Congress. Now, without going into details or reading the great quantity of letters I have on the subject, let me read just one letter addressed to me by a man who has taken part in the coal difficulties in the western field. He is a member of the International Board, the only member from Canada I believe. His letter is dated 9th April last, and is in part as follows:

I am very optimistic as to the final outcome of the negotiations. I feel that Wednesday night or Thursday at latest should see the sub-committee ready to report to the full conference committee, and in conference have an agreement to present to the miners for ratification. Permit me to say in all sincerity how deeply I appreciate the effort for the men I am feebly trying to represent at this time.

I was out there nine days, doing what I could to bring about an amicable adjustment between the operators and the men.

I know of the general unsavory remarks—

And he had not heard my hon. friend from Saskatoon.

—that are oft-times levelled at any Government, and the respective officials thereof. However, I wish to state very frankly that when an agreement is finally arrived at I