

no doubt will be more prominently before us during the coming year. There have been many complaints and criticisms during the past few years of the high freight rates, and the argument has been used that freight rates, were high because of the high wages paid to the railway employees. Having been identified in many ways with railway operation and railway construction not only in this country but in the United States, and having had the privilege of studying railway conditions not only in Great Britain but on the continent for the last twenty years, I feel that I can speak with some authority on this question more particularly from the point of view of the railway employee. I believe that an organized propaganda has been carried on to confuse the public mind over this question of high freight rates, and to make it appear that they were due to the wages paid to railway employees. An organized propaganda has been carried on with a view to creating that impression, and I should like to go into that phase of the question for just a moment in view of my position with regard to labour, and because of the fact that I am directly in touch with labour, the railway employees, and the railway question. My only object is to have the true facts placed before this House and before those who have an interest in this question. Many have approached me, with whom I have had discussions of this question, stating that they have been misled into believing that the high freight rates were the direct result of the high wages paid the railway employees. Labour is interested in railway rates only in so far as those rates will conduce to the prosperity of the railway and the prosperity of the country, and they are only asking, and so far as I know have only endeavoured to obtain, recognition of that to which they were justly entitled. I hope and trust that parliament will not in any way endeavour to bring in the wage question when it comes to consider the adjustment of our freight rates. I believe the officers of our different railway companies are quite capable of adjusting the wages of the employees over whom they have control, and in that connection I should like to quote a paragraph from a speech delivered by Sir Henry Thornton:

Trade unions are here. They cannot be gotten rid of, and it is very much better to work with them than to fight with them. I have had considerable experience with labouring men on both sides of the Atlantic, perhaps more especially in England, and I have never yet had a trade union leader or a trade union play any other way than is fair.

[Mr. Humphrey.]

Further on he says:

I see no reason why there should be constantly recurring contentions between capital and labour. I believe that labour properly handled will invariably respond.

I believe that is practically the position that labour would take also. It is a well known fact that conditions respecting labour in this country are as good to-day as in any other country of the world, but on account of the misrepresentation, as I would call it, that has been going on, perhaps by members of this House, not directly but indirectly, in reference to wages being the cause of certain conditions, I should like to refer to that matter a little further.

In the month of September last year an application was made to the Railway Commission for a reduction of freight rates. I understand that the hearing has not yet taken place.

The application was made on the 4 p.m. 11th of September, 1924, and in arguing for a reduction in freight

rates, the applicants urged that the wages of the employees should be reduced. I believe the company that made the application is a member of the Manufacturers' Association, and I would infer that this was an organized attempt to create in the public mind the impression that the wages of the railway employees were too high. The application was made by the Tudhope Anderson Company, Limited, of Winnipeg, which has a factory in the town of Orillia, Ontario. They applied to the Board of Railway Commissioners:

—for an order declaring that all existing tariffs of freight rates established and promulgated by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company and by the Canadian National Railway Company and the entire rate structure embodied in and upon which the said tariffs have been promulgated and established are unfair, discriminatory, excessive, and contrary to the provisions of the Railway Act, and that the said rates as established and promulgated constitute an unjust, unfair and unreasonable exaction upon all shippers and consumers of goods throughout Canada, and unfairly exact from shippers and consumers of goods throughout Canada large sums of money which from the point of view of sound public policy and of fair dealing between shippers and consumers of goods throughout Canada on the one hand, and the said railway companies and their employees on the other, should be prohibited and brought to an end.

They further state:

That the respect in which the said tariffs and the freight rate structure embodied therein and the exactions made under and by virtue thereof are unreasonable, unfair, discriminatory and excessive is by reason of the fact that the said rates contain as a large element an allowance for the wages of the employees of the said railway companies, out of which allowance for wages the said railway companies pay to employees engaged by them in the carriage of goods