

and who had not been guilty of the commission of overt acts would be returned to their former positions, runs, seniority, standing, etc.

(c) Is answered in the reply given to (b). I am indeed glad to know that yourself and other eminent and representative members of the Dominion parliament are taking such a commendable interest in the welfare of Grand Trunk employees who have not yet been returned to service, or who, having been returned to service, have not been conceded their former positions or runs.

I presume Mr. Murdock had read the debate which took place. I think my hon. friend asked me whether anything was said with regard to the pension, and in reply I said that pensions had not been mentioned, and Mr. Murdock says in this letter:

The question of pensions or of conserving the pension rights of the employees who had been on strike and who were by the settlement to be returned to service was not even considered as a factor in determining the basis of settlement. Representatives of labour and labouring men, generally, recognize the fact that pension schemes, provident fund arrangements and relief associations, inaugurated, fostered and maintained by railroad companies or large employers of labour, without the employees co-operative sanction to the formation of such concerns are usually found to be nothing more or less than a pre-arranged and contemplated outlay or investment on the part of the employer to test the loyalty of the men to themselves, as individuals, and to each other, in the event of just such trying negotiations as preceded the strike of July 18 last.

Organizations of labour in train and yard service have not considered it as a part of their legitimate sphere of effort to make representation to railroad companies or railroad officials as to the basis upon which pension allowances should be inaugurated or maintained, and in the case of the Grand Trunk strike and settlement the question was not given serious consideration by the employees. Any action that the Grand Trunk Railway Company saw fit to take in reference to the pension rights of employees prior to the Grand Trunk strike, they had an absolute right to take and maintain, and they are apparently disposed to exercise the same rights and privileges which they formerly enjoyed in this respect.

From every consistent and logical standpoint upon which the question of pension might be considered, it should surely be recognized that the mere fact of an employee leaving the service for a period of two weeks and thereby breaking a continued service of many years should not be sufficient to debar him from all rights to a pension fund, if that pension fund had been inaugurated and was maintained for the purpose of conserving in old age the rights of an employee who had given to the company many years of faithful service.

The Grand Trunk Railway Company's present attitude demonstrates conclusively that the estimate placed on the average railway company's pension fund has been well founded.

Mr. KING.

And now comes the conclusion, and it is to this in particular that I invite the attention of hon. gentlemen opposite.

In conclusion, I would suggest that the present attitude of Grand Trunk officials who have violated indiscriminately the first two articles of the terms of settlement is deplorable, but if I might be permitted to do so, I would suggest that some of the hon. gentlemen at Ottawa who are taking such an apparently deep interest in this situation, are, to use the expression attributed to you on page 3480 of 'Hansard,' under date of February 10, 'barking up the wrong tree.'

The agreement made when the strike was called off was under the circumstances equitable, and amply sufficient to conserve the rights and interests of all concerned, public, employer and employee. The deplorable conditions that have existed and that exist at the present time are wholly and solely chargeable to Grand Trunk officials disregard for contract obligations except as expediency suggests.

I trust that the information given above will be looked upon as satisfactorily answering the questions asked in your letter of February 7, at least to some extent.

In conclusion, it might not be amiss for me to advise you in case that I should be looked upon as politically biased, that I was raised in a family Liberal in politics always, but that I have personally voted for the past 18 years as opportunity afforded with the Conservative party. I believe, however, in giving credit where credit is due, and have been deeply disappointed to find that many eminent gentlemen like yourself are apparently disposed to place the responsibility for the failure of Grand Trunk officials to carry out their agreement on the shoulders of some one else.

I remain, very truly yours,

JAMES MURDOCK,

Vice-president B. of R. T.

In view of these several communications which speak for themselves it is not necessary for me to add anything further. It has been shown pretty conclusively that my hon. friend (Mr. Northrup) has no ground for the charges he makes in this amendment. It has been proven that as a matter of fact instead of being deserving of criticism and blame on the occasions to which he refers, the government is entitled to credit. If my hon. friend will consider the matter fairly, and if he will consider what is more important, namely, the significance of the discussion of labour matters in this House, he will, I believe, feel that it is at least due to the present situation that he should withdraw this amendment. I can say with confidence to hon. gentlemen opposite that in administering the Department of Labour I have tried as between labour and capital to be absolutely impartial; I have tried above everything else to keep the labour movement and labour questions out of party politics altogether, and I think hon. gentlemen on both sides of the House will agree that such is the only attitude that can