

voice to the considerations that have been urged on the attention of the Minister of Railways and Canals in regard to this important matter. The Minister of Railways and Canals is under a mistake in supposing that on all occasions the railway employees prefer to have long hours even when the company would prefer that they should work a lesser number of hours. I remember that ten years ago I brought this matter to the attention of the House, and particularly to the attention of the hon. gentleman who is now leading the Opposition, when the Conservative party was in power; and I pointed out that the conductors and engineers on the Canadian Pacific Railway in the North-west were running distances and running for hours, inconsistent with efficiency, inconsistent with health, and inconsistent with safety to the public. The result was that the Canadian Pacific Railway changed the distances and changed the hours. I think it would be wise for the Minister of Railways to postpone final decision until the men interested were heard, and in doing so he would be acting on a precedent set by the Conservative Government. A few years ago, when Sir John Thompson was Prime Minister, a very important change was about to be introduced by legislation in this House, and although the legislation had matured and had gone, I think, through all its stages in this Chamber, nevertheless when some hon. members, among them the hon. member for South Leeds (Mr. Taylor) went to Sir John Thompson, he allowed us to introduce a large deputation of railway men, and the result was that the legislation did not go through at that time. I hope, because this is a matter in which the public is deeply interested and in which justice is concerned as well, the Minister will hear the men before finally putting this Order in Council into operation, in fact, I think they should have been heard before the Order in Council was passed.

The PRIME MINISTER. This question is certainly one of very serious importance to the whole community, not only to the railway men but to the people at large; but I am afraid it has been discussed by some hon. gentlemen opposite under somewhat of a misapprehension. The rules which are now complained of have been approved by the Governor in Council; they have been approved in the ordinary manner and under ordinary circumstances, and this is not the first time that rules of this kind have come before the Governor in Council for approval. From time to time the rules have to be changed, and when this occurs they are submitted to the Governor in Council and are sent to the Minister of Railways, by him they are referred to the experts of his department, and if they are favourably reported on by those experts, the rules are sent to the Governor in Council for approval. This is the procedure which has been fol-

Mr. DAVIN.

lowed in this instance. I am not aware that on any occasion the railway men have been consulted as to those rules. This, however, is a progressive age, and what has been done before may not be followed to-day, and I think it would not only be proper but quite valuable that the men who have formulated the rules should be consulted. There has been some misapprehension in regard to this matter, because I was quite astonished to receive a few days ago a letter from a friend who takes an interest in railway men, stating that I had given a pledge that the men would be heard. I have no recollection of having been interviewed on this question; of course, the matter may have passed from my memory, but I do not think so, and I have not the faintest recollection that I was approached either in an interview or privately as to this particular matter. But however that may be, the character of the rules is so important that the other side of the question should be placed before the Government. Of course, there are two sides to this question, as on every other question. The men who are going to operate the road may find fault, and they may be right in doing so; on the other hand, it cannot be supposed that the company have not good reasons to have these rules put in force. I do not say whether one side is right or wrong, it is impossible to pass judgment unless a man is an expert. But I must take exception to the statement of the hon. member for West York (Mr. Wallace) that these rules were objectionable owing to their tendency to Americanize our railways. It is not a good objection on the floor of this House to present against these rules that they are liable to Americanize our roads whether the rules are good or bad, and the fact that they are endorsed by the United States is no reason why they should not be adopted in this country, if they are intrinsically good. Moreover, my hon. friend insinuated that this change was proposed because the manager of the Grand Trunk Railway is an American. I do not think this objection can be sustained. Mr. Hays is not the first American imported from the United States to manage our railways; there has been other precedents and no fault has ever been found with such precedents. But I think we may on this occasion cast aside these considerations; the subject is too serious to be treated in this way, and it must be treated on its merits. In this progressive age every citizen has a right to be heard whenever laws are proposed to be passed by the Parliament of Canada or the Government of the Dominion which would affect in any way his position in the country. The Government is quite disposed to act according to this view.

Mr. HAGGART. I have not seen the rules that have been approved, and I doubt whether if I had seen them, I would have been able to state whether they were right