

House of Commons will be found the Hon. Mr. Gregg's statement of what were the final terms of the officers of the railway companies and the final demands of the men, and the latter were very far from the grounds which were submitted as authorizing this strike vote. At that time it was not a 6 per cent offer from the company but a 4 per cent wage increase.

Hon. Mr. Bouffard: Four cents.

Hon. Mr. Farris: Did I say five?

Hon. Mr. Bouffard: You said 4 per cent.

Hon. Mr. Farris: A wage increase of 4 cents per hour to become effective September 1, 1950, and a five-day forty-hour week, with pay for 48 hours, to become effective October 1, 1951. This is a complete surrender of the principle of a 40-hour week, as demanded by the men. These men for years have been working a 48-hour week, and there has been no suggestion that their health has been affected. This offer of a 40-hour week was not to take effect for another year, and there is the requirement of a three-year contract with an escalator clause of two-thirds a cent wage increase for each one point in the rise of the cost of living. Against this the men still demanded a five cent increase and a five-day forty-hour week with pay for 48 hours, to become effective September 1, 1951, and a two-year contract. And there was a controversy as to a delay of nine months before the matter became too arbitrarily imposed upon them. The railwaymen of Canada never had an opportunity to vote on that. The only thing this strike vote last May or June did was to get the men to sign a blank cheque to the effect that unless they got everything they wanted, or decided they ought to have, they would be authorized to strike. I say that is all wrong. It never justified a small group of men under two leaders—and without the members of the unions ever knowing anything about the terms—throwing this country into chaos.

In the next place, I submit that this strike was not justified because the issue had been narrowed down to such an extent that the principles the men had striven for were so completely acknowledged that I can conceive of nothing, except an undue sense of power and a consciousness of the might they had within them, that would explain how in these circumstances we were brought here to deal with an emergency created by the decision of this group.

In the next place, this strike was not justified by making Donald Gordon the scapegoat.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. Farris: I have read the newspapers and looked everywhere to find out

just what the complaints are against him. It has been claimed that Mr. Gordon came right out in the first place and made a "final" offer. Nowhere have I been able to find that these men ever charged Donald Gordon with not acting in good faith. Nor can I find that he ever misstated the facts, or misled or double-crossed the men, or did anything except talk to them straight from the shoulder. I can understand some honourable senators saying "Well, we think if Gordon had only pussy-footed or soothed them down a little more they might have carried on".

Hon. Mr. MacLennan: Who said that?

Hon. Mr. Farris: I am saying that that might be argued. Do not think I am saying it.

It has been said that Mr. Gordon made a "final" offer when, in fact, it was not really a final offer. I have no doubt that Mr. Gordon's first offer was made conscientiously and honestly after he had received the full advice of his statisticians, and that he believed he was making the best offer the railroads could stand. When he made further concessions later he was only acting with the consciousness of the impending disaster and not because he felt that these concessions were justified. He was faced by two evils, the lesser one being to surrender more than the railroads could pay in order to avoid disaster. It has also been said that he was not conciliatory in his manner and told the men that if they went on strike they would be sorry. Well, I hope they are sorry.

He is also accused of having broken off negotiations. I have here a newspaper clipping of a statement by Mr. Mather, the president of the CPR. I do not suppose Mr. Mather has any inclination to hold a brief for the president of the company that is making it as tough as possible for the CPR; but I think his statement should be fully recorded in our *Hansard*. Here is what Mr. Mather had to say.

The statement attributed to Mr. M. J. Coldwell by press dispatches to the effect that Mr. Gordon had abruptly brought strike negotiations to an end is untrue and can only be attributable to a one-sided account of the negotiations given to Mr. Coldwell by representatives of the unions. Nothing was said by Mr. Gordon on that occasion or any other that was not the result of careful consideration by the railway representatives jointly in what was their common problem. The fact is that, at the conclusion of the meeting on (last) Saturday afternoon, an adjournment was taken until 7.30 Saturday night in order that both parties should have an opportunity of reconsidering their stand on a question of such great public importance.

Now, honourable senators, listen to this:

When the conference was resumed Saturday evening the representatives of the men again said that their position was unchanged and it was because of this stand that negotiations were discontinued.