

*The Budget—Mr. Humphrey*

experience I wish to associate myself with those who are working along these lines. If steps taken in this direction go hand in hand with the curtailment of military expenditures, then by all means let us direct our efforts to that end with a view to arriving at some permanent peace policy.

Certain references have been made by some hon. members this session and in previous sessions, from which I desire to dissociate myself. I refer particularly to statements made by the hon. member for South Oxford (Mr. Sutherland) and the hon. member for Sherbrooke (Mr. McCrea). In connection with the question of what policy would be best for this country in view of agricultural, industrial and general conditions, many hon. members have stated in this House and out of it that the cause of the difficulties involved would be found in the amounts paid in wages. It is only fair to the railroad men throughout the country that I should state briefly another view of the matter. I listened attentively to the address of the hon. member for Sherbrooke and particularly to his reference to the question of railroad men's wages, the conditions under which they are working, and so on. I do not wish to deal unfairly with my hon. friend. Let me first, however, refer to the remarks of the hon. member for South Oxford in the debate on the Address. The hon. gentleman must have been under some misapprehension. I am sure he was sincere in the statements he made, so far as his knowledge went, but I may be permitted to make a few remarks in reply, based upon some twenty-odd years' practical experience in many different phases of railroad work. He suggested that on occasions the men deliberately aimed at getting time and a half of overtime. I may say that there is no part of western Canada where railroad men receive time and a half except in one class of service, namely, the switching service. On the eastern lines they do have a provision for time and a half after a certain period. The statement to which I refer was made on March 7, last, and was as follows:

By reason of the fact that after a railway employee had put in so many hours, if he could delay a train service he would obtain pay and a half for the overtime. I know as a matter of fact instances where this has been deliberately done by the employees operating trains, particularly freight trains, in the province of Ontario. Hon. members can easily see what an incentive it would be to do something of that nature.

Now, I think that any official of any railway company and anyone connected with railway operation in Canada knows that there is no such thing as a man deliberately delaying any train for the purpose of compensation,

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and if such a case was brought to the notice of the officers, steps would be taken to see that it did not occur again. There may have been isolated cases, but certainly it is not a common practice, nor one that is sanctioned by the railroad officers and employees throughout this Dominion, and I am sure they would be very glad if the hon. member would draw such a case to their attention. In connection with the statement made by the hon. member for South Oxford (Mr. Sutherland) in the early part of the session, I do not want in any way to take a mean advantage, but my attention has been drawn to his statement by so many different parties throughout the Dominion that I wish to place on record a reply to it that appeared in the Edmonton Journal under date of April 3rd last:

Editor, The Journal.

Sir—It would perhaps be scarcely fair, on the subject of "the big wages paid to engine drivers, etc." (whoever that very compendious phrase may indicate) to expect too much from your evidently ill-informed correspondent, Emmeline Gibb Taylor, in tonight's Journal; seeing that only very recently Donald Sutherland, M.P., has been quoted all over Canada to the same effect, with much wild and wholly unauthenticated assertion about \$5,000 and \$6,000 salaries per annum.

It does not seem to be understood that engine service on our railways is governed by seniority. I have myself nearly 13 years' rights as fireman and engineer, and the highest sum I ever made in one year is \$2,326.65, and I have only once besides exceeded the \$2,000 mark. What is known as the Chicago joint agreement is in force on Canadian, as it is on United States railways. This arrangement entered into by ourselves, restricts the monthly mileage of passenger men to 4,800 miles, and of freight men to 3,800 miles. This is to divide the work in order to help the spare men who cannot command a regular engine. Allowing for the very largest and highest paid class of engine running out of this city, and assuming that the engineman could make maximum mileage on that run, and lost no time throughout the entire year—a state of things which hardly could be and which I know as a matter of actual fact, is not done, the maximum results in passenger and freight service respectively would work out at \$3,473 (four men only) and \$3,210 per annum. The men who are able to command anything like these figures have reached this position after years of such service as in the opinions of those best competent to judge is not very adequately characterized by the word "luxury." When they get there I say that \$5,000 per annum is impossible. There are certainly times when money may be made at a rate that might approach that figure if kept up for 52 weeks a year; wrecks, when men have to remain on duty until the road is clear, sleep or no sleep; snow blockades, when we have been stalled, without food, for 12 and 18 hours in a drift, and the very delay has necessitated turning the engine out again the moment she reached the shop; a rush of business, when men have been called for duty before their rest period had expired—all these are highly eloquent of "luxury"! So far as the class of spare men are concerned, however, (and we are a large class), this morning I drew a pay cheque of \$82.35 for two weeks' work as engineer. This is not the highest I have drawn for such a