

period they were of necessity compelled to call upon the powers that be for authority to increase the tolls which they might charge for their services. Increases were granted, which I shall deal with a little later on.

But in April, 1921, not very long after a new Chairman had been appointed to the Board of Railway Commissioners, that gentleman stepped aside from his official duties and stood upon a public platform, and after prefacing his remarks by saying that he probably was out of order in saying that he was going to say, he stated that railway rates were high, but that they could not be reduced. I quote his words as they appeared in the public press under date of April 7th, 1921.

Hon. Mr. CASGRAIN: Hon. Frank Carvell.

Hon. Mr. ROBERTSON: The gentleman who spoke those words was the Hon. Mr. Carvell, and I speak with all respect to his memory, because he is no longer here, and I do him the honour of saying that I believe he was entirely honest in the statements that he made, although I hope to prove that he was absolutely mistaken. That honourable gentleman stepped aside from his position as Chairman of the Board of Railway Commissioners, but with all the prestige of chairmanship, and said:

"Only by dispensing with unnecessary train service, and by reducing wages, can freight rates be brought down. Railways cannot make ends meet on even present high rates if they have to pay such extraordinary wages."

He subsequently referred to the wages as being "unwarranted, unreasonable, wholly indefensible." He pictured Canadian railway employees and the leaders of railway employees as "labour aristocrats," arbitrarily forcing the Canadian railways to adopt United States rates of wages—"holding a gun to the heads of railway companies," as he termed it.

Now, honourable gentlemen, I bring this statement into the discussion for the particular reason that statements publicly made by the Chairman of the Board of Railway Commissioners at that time carried with them such weight as to force their acceptance upon public men and to a large extent form public opinion through the press of this country, so that the public were imbued with the idea that Canadian railway employees were receiving wages that were extravagant, exorbitant, unreasonable and unwarranted, as Mr. Carvell mentioned.

It is my purpose to-day to produce evidence to the contrary, because the time has come when the question of railway freight rates is

before the tribunal that must pass upon it, and if it is not properly solved, serious difficulties may arise that will affect all the people of this country. Therefore it is proper and opportune that this matter should receive consideration and that the facts should be laid before you at this time, in order that our duties in that regard may be fulfilled.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: I would ask my honourable friend if he does not think that raising his voice in Parliament on this matter is perhaps invading the jurisdiction of the tribunal which will have the duty of settling the question?

Hon. Mr. ROBERTSON: I desire to inform my honourable friend that it is not my purpose to make any argument in connection with the subject; but I do want to place on record certain facts that have a very distinct bearing on operation costs of railways, and directly affect 175,000 railway employees, or indirectly, including their dependents, three-quarters of a million people in this country, who are the pawns in this game. I want the public and Parliament to know what the facts are, so that when judgment is rendered upon this important question, if there is, as there has been in the past, an appeal to Parliament—which is responsible for much of this difficulty—Parliament may be informed of the facts. I think I should not be doing my public duty as a citizen and member of Parliament if I did not bring the facts to the attention of this House.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: My difficulty lies in this fact. My honourable friend, who is equipped with certain knowledge because of his training, brings before this Chamber a statement of facts, but it seems to me that it would be his duty as a citizen of this country to bring those facts before the tribunal which would have to pass upon them, and which could also hear whatever answer might be given by the railway authorities; for there are always two parties to a case.

Hon. Mr. ROBERTSON: I would have much sympathy with my honourable friend's view and suggestion were it not for the fact that I purpose to-day to correct statements of a member of the Board of Railway Commissioners who stepped outside his duties and, after apologizing for doing so, made those very statements which have brought into existence the conditions to which I wish to draw attention. I think my honourable friend will not deny me the privilege of saying a word on behalf of three-quarters of a million of people—a privilege at least equal to that of which the Chairman of the Board of Railway Commissioners himself took advantage, though