

like a football, instead of being dealt with as a serious, vital problem demanding immediate solution?

Let me state the problem again, in as few words as possible. We have too much transportation for the number of our people. We spend \$60,000,000 every year to operate our state railway and maintain foolish and unprofitable competition with the private railway. Then the nation is spending, let us say, \$100,000,000 a year more to provide the means for a third system, the highway carrier system, to cut the throats of the other two, always by foolish, unproductive competition. The big problem, it seems to me, is to work up our courage to the point of ceasing to indulge in such extravagance.

If we must give them money, let us consider a means of so giving it that it shall be a reward for co-operating and bringing common sense into our complicated network of transportation troubles, and not be a reward for cutting one another's throat, haggling and arguing and providing politicians with meaty contracts. That is what we have to consider, and we must do it soon. It will be unfortunate for most of us if those whom we are in theory supposed to lead and guide are compelled to find the solution for us and force it down our throats, so to speak. Discretion and expediency seem to me to suggest that we had better find the solution first.

Needless to say, I shall vote for anything that calls for immediate and effective action, for I am against the policy of *laissez-faire*.

Hon. C. W. ROBINSON: Honourable senators, in the discussion of our railway problem it is probably better to say nothing at all than to give expression to views which will not stand the test of critical examination and which only serve to add confusion to a very troublesome situation. The members of the special committee have spent their time freely in listening to the views of the many witnesses who appeared before them, and it is not surprising that the opinions of thinking men do not always coincide. One has to bear in mind that the processes of the human mind do not always work in the same way with different individuals. Conclusions reached by one person, which he considers absolutely sound, are often the very opposite of conclusions reached by another individual, which he is equally sure are perfectly correct.

Then there is the question of environment and of the advantages which may be gained by certain lines of action and which may unconsciously affect the views expressed by one side or the other. We have had before us representatives of the two great railway systems. We have also had evidence from

two or three outside persons who are not supposed to have any bias or interest in any way. Needless to say, they are as diametrically opposed to one another as the members of the railway companies themselves.

The chief discussions have been with regard to the proposal for unification put forward by Sir Edward Beatty, the President of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company, which was supported before the committee by many of the officials of that railway. The contention was made on behalf of the Canadian Pacific Railway that very large savings in cost of operation could be effected by unification, and by unification alone, and it was suggested that the unified railway system should be controlled by a board of directors on which the two railways should have equal representation with independent men appointed by some outside bodies.

The officials of the Canadian National Railways contended that the estimate made by Sir Edward Beatty and his officials was based upon wrong premises, and that in order to effect such savings it would be necessary to make wholesale dismissals and to abandon property to an extent which was impossible of attainment. It was not denied that such savings could be made, or at least a large proportion of them, but the Canadian National officials asserted that public opinion would prevent the accomplishment of anything approaching the claims of the Canadian Pacific.

Professor McDougall, of Queen's University, gave some interesting testimony on the economics of the situation, in which he showed pretty conclusively that the whole railway business of Canada is on the decline, and that it is unreasonable to hope for any very great recovery. This leads me to the conclusion that any estimate of savings based upon the volume of business of any past years cannot be a very reliable estimate unless one knows what the future years' business will be.

Professor McDougall also presented some facts with regard to the labour situation which are very interesting, and which showed conclusively and beyond successful contradiction that the railway employees, and particularly the running trades, are paid at a rate too much out of line with other occupations. All I would say is that, knowing the railway men as I do, I have no doubt that if properly approached they will see the reasonableness of making their contribution to the relief of the nation's business.

So in trying to arrive at some conclusions which have at least a semblance of reasonableness one must bear in mind how important it is to show a spirit of fairness to all parties concerned.