

*The Address—Mr. Coldwell*

this I believe to be the traditional parliamentary attitude generally wherever parliaments like ours exist, and is consistent with the tradition in this Canadian House of Commons.

Having said that, let me turn immediately to the railway strike. There is no doubt that any dislocation caused by a shut-down of traffic on the Canadian Pacific Railway will become increasingly serious as time goes on if the present situation is allowed to continue. There is no doubt, therefore, that it is in the national interest that railway operations should be recommenced as expeditiously as possible while another attempt is made to settle the differences between management and the employees.

That, it seems to me, was the desire of the Prime Minister in his closing remarks this afternoon. But I think we should go farther than waiting, as he suggested. A request should be made to both parties to recommence railway operations immediately on the basis previously existing, without prejudice to the rights of either side, and such a proposal is indeed reasonable. I believe that the C.P.R. employees will agree to this proposal. Indeed, they have already indicated that they would do so in a statement they issued two or three days ago, on January 7 to be precise. So far the C.P.R. management has refused, and if that refusal is continued—indeed I think the time has come now—the only alternative is for the federal government to appoint a controller to take temporary management of the C.P.R. and direct the immediate resumption of operations while further negotiations are continuing. I reiterate that this should be done without delay.

It is becoming increasingly apparent that the principal issue involved is the question of the management's desire to cease the employment of firemen on diesel engines in freight and yard services. On that issue the main disagreement between the company and the union, or its employees, is the question of safety. Now, the safety factor cannot be ignored either by this house, by the company, by the union or by the country. We in this House of Commons have a definite responsibility to the nation to make certain that any change which may subsequently be put into effect should completely safeguard the interests of the public in every particular.

Because the determination of this factor is really a technical question, it is a matter that should be investigated by an impartial board of inquiry comprised of experts and technicians that would hear and study representations concerning the safety and other factors involved in the removal of firemen from diesel freight and yard locomotives. Indeed, the

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report of the conciliation board itself suggested some sort of survey after the proposed change had been made and in the light of experience gained. I believe it is the part of wisdom to conduct this inquiry first, particularly because the majority and minority reports disagreed on this point, and because of an obvious doubt even in the majority report which suggested that there might be reconsideration of the matter after a year's trial. I think we must take the doubts in the minds of the majority and the definite opinion of the minority into account.

The report of a board of inquiry such as we suggest should go to the mediation board thereafter appointed by the federal government, which would seek to mediate all issues remaining in dispute between the two parties, and seek to reach an agreement on the part of both parties. In the meantime, let me reiterate, the public interest requires the immediate resumption of the services over the C.P.R., and I believe it is the duty of this parliament to serve the public interest and to do indeed what we are suggesting.

Another important but separate problem never far from the minds of the employees of practically any industry you may name is the problem of automation. I am not saying that the problem of automation is specifically involved in the present railway dispute, but no government can stand idly by while the advent of this revolution in productive techniques creates certain crises in industry. There is no doubt that these new developments in production can be of great benefit to the community as a whole, but only if there is over-all planning to smoothly adjust the economy to the changes that are taking place or are anticipated. It is of little satisfaction to the worker if a magnificent new and technologically superior machine deprives him of his job and there is no other job to be found; nor is automation of much advantage to workers in industries, whether in factories, on the farms or in mines, if it deprives them of their means of life and of their markets.

Accordingly we think this is an opportunity for the federal government to consider this problem and no longer delay the appointment of a council comprised of representative employers, of trade unions, of government, of technical experts and other interests, to study and advise this house on the impact of automation, and to make sure that the new wealth that automation will make possible will be shared by all groups in the community. Intelligent approaches to all these problems should give authoritative advice on how best to promote the industrial, transportation and other changes involved in