

Legislation Respecting Railway Matters

purpose we hope that by agreement immediate consideration can be given to a bill which is now ready and which, it is hoped and expected, will bring the strike to an end on terms which will be just and fair to all concerned and which will protect the national interest.

We have also, Mr. Speaker, a second bill ready dealing with railway matters. This bill has a relationship to certain of the problems bearing on the dispute which brought about this strike, as well as earlier ones, and if it becomes law we believe it will facilitate the success of the negotiations to which reference is made in the first bill.

● (2:50 p.m.)

As members of parliament, Mr. Speaker, we have serious responsibilities to our country as we consider the issues before us. As members of the government we have special responsibilities and as Prime Minister I, of course, have the heaviest responsibility of all. I know all hon. members of the house will discharge their responsibilities at this time in the spirit of loyalty and service to our country which brought us here.

At this time I ask for the co-operation of all hon. members in making it possible for the government to place its proposals before the house for consideration without delay. I believe the strike emergency justifies this request, just as I believe the importance of the legislation deserves thorough and searching debate.

I hope, Mr. Speaker, the house will permit me to put again on the record of *Hansard* words that were used by Hon. George Drew, then leader of the opposition, in 1950, when the House of Commons was facing a similar emergency and was asked by the government of that day to deal with that emergency. Mr. Drew said then:

What the people of Canada want us to do is get the railways working as quickly as possible. I believe that is the spirit of every member of this house. Collectively those who sit here represent all the people of Canada. It makes no difference what party we support in our own community; we represent all the people. Therefore—

—he added—

—we here have the great and proud and heavy responsibility of speaking for all Canadians. The well-being and security of the whole Canadian community is our supreme responsibility. When the well-being of the people of Canada is threatened in this or any other way, parliament, and the government, which is its executive branch, must take those steps which will preserve the national economy and the security of the home life of all our people.

It is in the spirit of those words, Mr. Speaker, that I ask for the co-operation of all members of parliament at this time in facilitating and expediting the procedures so we will be able to discuss the legislation before us with a minimum of delay.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I am sure Hon. George Drew, when he reads the words of the Prime Minister, will realize that those sitting opposite by whom he was condemned for so long, use his words today as the cornerstone of their argument.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I recall very well that debate in 1950. The attitude then taken by the Conservative party was that in so far as compulsory arbitration was concerned the party was against it, and members of this party voted accordingly when a vote took place on the motion made by the then prime minister.

I am rather surprised at the general attitude of the Prime Minister today. After the bumbling of his government for weeks I expected that instead of making a provocative speech, an alibi speech, he would have made an appeal not only to parliament but to Canadians as a whole. Instead of that he chose the course of a partisan speech.

Some hon. Members: Shame.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Yes; it is shameful that this should be so, with the Prime Minister trying to explain the dilatory uncertainty of a government lasting for weeks on end. That is what they are attempting to do. From the end of July on, everybody except the government knew there was going to be a strike. Everyone in this country knew. It was made perfectly clear on July 11 and 12, after the initial report, that the terms of the report of Mr. Justice Munroe would not be accepted. It is understandable. In his speech today the Prime Minister forgot to deal with the Pearson formula, the 30 per cent basis of settlement which added to the problem of inflation, with the approval of the government, contributed to by its diplomatic forcefulness in bringing about a settlement. That is the reason why we find ourselves faced with this situation. He rushed in; he established the reputation of being the great conciliator, the conciliator who was able to offer