

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Wednesday, May 14, 1958

The house met at 2.30 p.m.

CANADIAN PACIFIC RAILWAY

ANNOUNCEMENT BY MINISTER OF SETTLEMENT OF STRIKE

Hon. Michael Starr (Minister of Labour): With your permission, sir, and with the indulgence of the house I should like to make a brief reference to the recently concluded strike by the Canadian brotherhood of locomotive firemen and enginemen on the Canadian Pacific Railway. As hon. members probably are aware by now, the strike has been terminated. Agreement was signed in Montreal last night at 11.59 p.m. by Mr. N. R. Crump, president, on behalf of the Canadian Pacific Railway, and by Mr. John Graham, chairman of the Canadian Pacific branch of the firemen's brotherhood.

The signing of the agreement ended the strike in its third day and followed a series of negotiations which lasted right up to a few moments before the agreement was finally signed. Naturally I was most pleased when finality was reached in a situation which was at best troublesome and contentious and which at worst contained the elements of a far-reaching and serious impasse.

Hon. members are no doubt aware that the problem of the eventual disposition of the diesel firemen on the Canadian Pacific Railway is one which has exercised the close attention of the management of the railway and the representatives of the brotherhood involved, as well as the best efforts of a royal commission and the solicitude of successive governments for more than two years. As Minister of Labour I am happy to be able to report that the settlement which was reached was such that there will be an absolute minimum of dislocation in so far as the personnel involved are concerned.

I feel also that I should like to commend the principals on both sides in the negotiations for the fact that, even in the anxiety and at times heat of the discussions, they were able to keep before them the larger consideration of the general welfare, as well as their own particular interests which were, of course, extensive in this matter. I feel that the settlement which has been achieved is one which has given to both sides as much as could be expected under the circumstances. I feel also that the general welfare has been

served in that the matter has been brought to termination and the spectre of serious difficulty has been averted.

I may add that I was in almost constant communication with negotiators on both sides last evening, and I was most happy to be able to inform the Prime Minister shortly after midnight last night that agreement had been reached.

Mr. Hazen Argue (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, I am sure that we welcome most heartily the announcement that the Canadian Pacific Railway strike has been settled. We know that a railway strike at any time in a nation like ours is a serious matter. We have followed the negotiations, as reports have been appearing in the press, since they began. On the basis of the information we were able to get from the press I believe the settlement is not entirely but very closely in line with the offer made by the Canadian Labour Congress and union on Thursday last. It would seem that if a little extra effort had been made at that time on the part of the other people who were taking part in these three-way conferences, a settlement might then in fact have been reached so the railway strike would not have taken place. As I say, we are pleased that it has been settled; and no matter what has been said in the press to the contrary we think the results show that in Canada we have a very responsible labour movement.

SMALL LOANS ACT

AMENDMENT TO PLACE CEILING ON INTEREST RATES

Mr. Hazen Argue (Assiniboia) moved for leave to introduce Bill No. C-2, to amend the Small Loans Act.

Some hon. Members: Explain.

Mr. Argue: Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this bill is to place a ceiling on the interest rate that may be charged by small loans companies, namely an effective interest rate of 12 per cent per annum.

Motion agreed to and bill read the first time.

CRIMINAL CODE

AMENDMENT RESTRICTING CAPITAL PUNISHMENT TO CERTAIN OFFENCES

Mr. Harold E. Winch (Vancouver East) moved for leave to introduce Bill No. C-3, to amend the Criminal Code (capital punishment).