

appoint a Board of Arbitration and place on that board merchants, manufacturers, working men and capitalists, so that all interests in the country would be represented. Now, the hon. gentleman knows just as well as I do that the government could have appointed a thousand boards and not one of these boards could have affected the situation one way or the other. The dispute had already been investigated. It could not have been referred to a Board of Arbitration without each party being willing that it should be so referred and being willing to abide by the award. The parties were not willing. The only step that was possible, in so far as I could see in the premises, was for the government to endeavour in some way to affect public opinion on the question so as to compel each of the parties to realize that theirs was not the only interest that had to be taken account of, that while they, as working men, or a railway company, might believe they could afford to fight over their own differences, the public also had an interest in the situation and the public was entitled to have its voice heard. So, on the day following the strike, I addressed a communication to each of the parties asking them if they could not see their way to refer this difference to arbitration. I pointed out that they had professed to be willing to arbitrate before the strike had taken place. I had my doubts as to the genuineness of their professions and my doubts increased when I gave them an opportunity to refer the matter to arbitration and they did not take advantage of it. That was the first step necessary to be taken and it was taken promptly. Each of the parties had asked if they would not agree to refer the dispute to arbitration, and I told them that in the event of their being willing to do so the government would bear the expense of the arbitration and assist in every way to see that it was faithfully and properly carried out. What were the answers that were received? The answer that came from the men was largely an evasive answer. The answer that came from the company was no less evasive. Each of them was unwilling to appear to be the first to give in by consenting to arbitration. I shall not delay this discussion by reading the messages that were exchanged on the one hand and the other, but I would point out to the House that what the department sought to do on that occasion was to let the public know who was responsible as between the two parties for the situation which had been created. That could be made apparent if one or the other was refusing what was obviously fair, and I felt that sooner or later the pressure of public opinion would make itself felt to such a degree that the parties could not longer stand out against it, and

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that very soon the strike would be terminated. That communication was sent to each of the parties, and as neither of them sent satisfactory replies I addressed the following letter on July 2 to each of them—to Mr. Hays on the one side and to Messrs. Berry and Murdock on the other:

Referring further to my letter of the 20th inst. and the replies received, I would respectfully point out that neither the reply from the president of the company nor the reply from the representatives of the general committee of the employees, answers the question it asks and which is, whether, as representing one of the parties to the present dispute, you will now be willing to refer the existing differences to arbitration, provided a board of arbitrators mutually acceptable can be secured, and the necessary expenses incidental to such board met by the government. This is a question to which the people of Canada who, at the present are being more largely affected by the existing dispute than either of the parties, have a right to expect a definite reply, and which, as a minister responsible to them, I feel it my duty to ask on their behalf. Will you kindly give a direct answer to this question at your earliest convenience, that the public may be able to judge for itself of the present positions and attitude of the parties on a matter which so vitally affects its interests?

That letter or telegram, for as a matter of fact it was wired, gives the keynote to the attitude of the government at that time. The government had made up its mind that it would find out for the people of the country who was responsible for keeping up this dispute, it was determined to give each of the parties an opportunity of entering into an arrangement which would afford a satisfactory way out of the dispute, and if either failed to take advantage of the opportunity its action could speak for itself. The answers to that communication will be found in the papers which have been brought down to the House. In brief, the replies that we received were also evasive. The committee that were dealing with the case of the men replied that they did not have authority to refer the matter to a board other than one of the nature which they had agreed previously to refer it to. Mr. Hays replied that he had nothing to add to his previous letter. I continued to press for a definite reply, urging the obvious public grounds and in the course of another day or two one of the parties did finally consent to refer the dispute to a Board of Arbitration, this was the men. In their letter sent from Montreal on July 23, they give reasons which are well deserving of consideration and they say:

We recognize the special obligation to the public and regret exceedingly the inconvenience and loss to which public and private interests are being subjected, and with that recognition desire to advise you that we will be willing to refer the existing differences to