

Legislation Respecting Railway Matters

Medes and Persians. We must bring about a law which will be effective.

I fear that this bill, if passed, will lead to divisions within this nation and help to undermine respect for parliament, something which must be maintained. I know this is asking a lot, but surely the government now appreciates the fact that its indolence and uncertainty, its refusal to face facts when they should have been faced, have brought this nation to a serious position. I say also to the government of Canada: If you are not prepared to co-operate in bringing about a law which will be effective and fair, do not try to condemn those of us who want to see a law on the statute books which will be effective for taking a strong stand when presented with a bill which in our opinion can only cause dissension, strife and separation within the various areas of our nation and spell trouble, difficulty and uncertainty in the days ahead.

Look over the legislation. I have already made some suggestions. We have not yet been told whether the government might give consideration to some of them. I do not intend to repeat them; I referred to them last evening. Provide some fringe benefits. Why have members opposite forgotten the Freedman report? Is it in a pigeonhole along with the other reports which have died a natural death since this government came to office?

Give these people, men and women who work in this nation, some of these fringe benefits. Give them a degree of security of tenure, which they seek, something which goes far beyond the amount of the actual payment made for work done. There is nothing of this in the bill before the house. There is simply a declaration that this is to be the law, 6 per cent for 1966, with nothing on the Freedman recommendations whatsoever. Add some of these things to the bill. Bring about a feeling, as between labour and the nation, that we are interested in their welfare. You will find there is a favourable reaction. I know this.

I have talked to the man who works and to his wife who runs the home—and, remember, there are no earnings when a strike is on. They speak of these things, the little things, the amenities. They ask for changes in regard to those things which make it difficult for them to be as comfortable as otherwise they would be. Make those changes. Incorporate them. Do not let us have this picayune attitude regarding health benefits, holidays and sickness leave. These are amenities, these are

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

social security measures which the workers should have. Give them some of these things. Show that we think and feel for them. If we do this we shall bring about a new spirit within this nation.

• (3:50 p.m.)

I fear for my country with legislation like this. We in Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition want to end the strike. We will do anything to assist if the government on its part will show some consideration for these things that are necessary. I know there are some who say, "Why, they are getting so much now." That has always been the story, but taxes today eat up a great portion. The percentage of taxes today over all the areas of government is, I think, approximately 50 per cent.

The cost of living mounts every day and the government sits as a spectator taking the view that something is going to turn up and it is going to be all right. This government will bear a tremendous responsibility before history if it does not now begin to realize that what is being presented here is a bill of such harshness, without those amenities that could easily be granted, that it arouses antagonism. The amenities I mentioned a moment ago are the fringe benefits.

Even yet I hope the government will act. We cannot as an opposition, having implored the government to do something to end the strike—we demanded it should be stopped even before it began—we cannot, under those circumstances, be placed in a position where, without reconsideration by the government, we can give the legislation that support which we would want to give.

I therefore move, seconded by the hon. member for Ontario (Mr. Starr):

That all the words after "that" be struck out and the following substituted therefor:

This house declines to proceed with the second reading of a bill, the provisions of which, in their wide departure from the terms of the report of Mr. Justice Munroe, Chairman of the Conciliation Board, and in their failure to give any assurance of an equitable solution of the problems of fringe benefits or any directions as to the implementation of the Freedman report, do not provide an adequate solution of the current impasse.

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, I would like to raise a point of order with respect to the regularity of the amendment which has been moved by the right hon. Leader of the Opposition.

The principle of this bill is to provide for the resumption of the operations of the railways in Canada. The main purpose of the bill