

National Railways obtained \$77,863,938.23 from the public treasury; in 1924 they obtained \$23,710,616.70; in 1924-25 they obtained \$9,934,452.64, and I am happy to say that in the next year they only required \$10,000,000. In the following year they required another \$10,000,000, and for the year ending March 31, 1928 the figures are not available beyond this, that we advanced them \$15,000,000 with which to pay bank overdrafts of which, according to the figures brought down and laid before this house, nearly \$6,000,000 was used to pay instalments due for equipment trust obligations which normally would be paid out of income. So that, as far as the railways are concerned, they have not had in any one year during these years sufficient money available with which to pay the interest on the obligations now in the hands of the public. However, the railways have improved their condition very materially during the years recently passed, and we can only hope that if this country prospers as it should, under just and proper policies, they may be able to obtain sufficient traffic to enable them to provide revenue to meet interest charges on obligations held by the public.

Then my hon. friend the Minister of Railways dealt with another feature of the present political situation; he attacked the group system. Of all hon. gentlemen in this house who might attack that system, my hon. friend should be the last. When I recall the circumstances under which this government remained in power only a few short months ago; when I remember the hurried call which brought my hon. friend from Southeast Grey (Miss Macphail) off a steamship in Montreal, I am surprised that for a single moment my hon. friend should attack groups in this country. I will venture to read to him a few words written by his immortal countryman:

Blow, blow, thou winter wind,  
Thou art not so unkind  
As man's ingratitude:  
Thy tooth is not so keen,  
Because thou art not seen,  
Although thy breath be rude.

But I remember somewhat more clearly the observation of a great Frenchman:

We seldom find people ungrateful as long as we are in a condition to render them services.

That, it seems to me, must have been the thought in the minds of those who sit to my left.

Then my friend the Minister of Justice (Mr. Lapointe) essayed the gentle arts of advocacy. His speech also divided itself into two parts, in the first of which he contented himself with reading from Hansard the speeches made by various hon. members, contrasting one with

the other. It was a very delightful performance for those of us who had not been privileged to be present to hear the speeches delivered by their authors, because he did it most admirably. Then, in a moment of fine frenzy, he indicated how soon he was about to amend the constitution of Canada and pass legislation dealing with navigation laws, the merchant shipping acts and the Admiralty Act. Just why he should have chosen that moment to make that statement it is difficult to understand, but one admired the fine indignation and scorn which he poured upon the hon. member for St. Lawrence-St. George (Mr. Cahan), when he explained that at no distant date this Canadian parliament would pass statutes to deal with the merchant marine and navigation laws. Well, Mr. Speaker, as long as the flag of Mother Britain hangs over the taffrails of our ships, so long shall we rely upon the navigation laws of that country to protect our commerce on the high seas.

Then my delightful friend the Minister of Immigration and Colonization (Mr. Forke) made a defence of his department, and he explained with all the learning of a profound lawyer that section 18 of the Immigration Act governed, and that he had not those high prerogative powers which he has been so fond of exercising. It might be a little more to the point if he would venture to explain to us why he could not exercise the right in the one case, while in other cases he could exercise it so freely. According to the report that was brought down by the deputy minister, we find certain cases of those who would be charges upon the public revenue, or those who were feeble-minded or criminals, all within the prohibited class and I would remind the Minister of Immigration that the permits for a number of these cases to come into Canada were signed by the hon. gentleman himself. At least that is what the deputy of the department says in the report which has been laid upon the table of this house. Why the Minister of Immigration and Colonization should have decided that in a certain class of cases he had authority, but that in a case which arose a few days later he had no authority is somewhat difficult to understand. I feel that the lady and gentlemen who sit to my left when they looked at their former leader, and saw him no longer with them, and heard the terms of his observations, must have thought of Browning's "Lost Leader," and perhaps if I quote them a few lines from that poem they will illumine the dark recesses of my hon. friend's mind: