

Gompers and his course in discussing matters in the way he has been doing is a detriment to the country what is the matter of calling the attention of the hon. Minister of Labour to the fact and have him place one of his officers in communication with Mr. Gompers with the view of notifying him that the course he is taking is not in the interests of labour in this country. I do not care to take up any more of the time of the House but I understand there is to be some legislation proposed, probably to-day, and if there is to be I trust that all those hon. gentlemen who are so sincere in their efforts in behalf of the workmen of this country will lend their best efforts towards making this legislation as perfect as possible.

Motion to adjourn the House negatived.

SETTLEMENT OF RAILWAY LABOUR DISPUTES.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL (Hon. Sir William Mulock) moved second reading of Bill (No. 17) to aid in the settlement of railway labour disputes. He said: Mr. Speaker, this Bill has had the advantage of a discussion that has I trust prepared the mind of the House to give it a receptive consideration to the principles involved in the measure. Last session I had the honour of introducing a Bill of a similar nature, and on that occasion I stated that it was not the intention of the government then to press the Bill to a conclusion, but rather to leave it over to the present session in order that it might in the meantime receive the consideration not only of the employees and the employers, but also of the general public. Accordingly, I again bring the matter before the attention of the House, and I shall point out now wherein this Bill differs from the measure that was introduced last session. This Bill may be said to differ from the other in three respects. The Bill of last session provided for arbitration only—this Bill provides for an intermediate procedure, namely, an attempt at conciliation, and failing conciliation then arbitration. Under the Bill of last session the award of the arbitrators was enforceable by legal process to a certain extent as it provided penalties for those who disregarded the awards—the present measure departs from that, and instead of providing compulsion through the courts, it leaves the enforcement to such influences as may be brought about, in order to have it respected by public opinion and the good judgment of the parties concerned.

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax). In other words, do I understand that the arbitration is compulsory but without any legal sanction to enforce it.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. Yes. The award is given to the public and to the parties and there it rests. In the Bill of last session a permanent board of arbitra-

Mr. INGRAM.

tors was appointed by the parties and it was to remain in office for a certain term of years—under the present measure instead of there being a standing board, the scheme contemplates a special board to be chosen to deal with each case. These are, I think, the leading differences between the Bill of last session and the present Bill.

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax). As to the composition of the board; are the parties to have any voice in it under this Bill?

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. Yes. Later on I will explain the reason for the changes. The Bill recites that strikes and lockouts, or whatever may lead to strikes or lockouts, are against the public interest. I presume it is understood that the measure does not deal with labour disputes except in respect to railways, and it applies to all railways in Canada whether under the legislative control of the Dominion or the provinces, whether operated by government (the Intercolonial for example) or operated by corporations. The Bill also applies to street railways and to all other institutions that may be known as railways. The Bill recites the reasons why parliament should proceed in this way, namely: that the public is interested in the proper transportation of passengers, mails and freight, and that whatever is likely to interfere with such transportation is against the public interest, and that therefore the public have a right to intervene to prevent such injury to their interests. In the event of it appearing that there is likely to be any interruption of the transportation of passengers, mails, or freight, or in the event of a strike or a lock-out actually having occurred upon a railway, the Minister of Labour may invoke the machinery of this Bill. He may, on the application of either party, or on the application of the municipal council directly concerned, or he may of his own motion take steps to establish in the first place, a board of conciliation. He proceeds to do so by inviting the two parties to choose their conciliators, and if they comply with that request then it will be the duty of the two conciliators to choose a third. These three conciliators are the board of conciliation and mediation. In the event of either party making default, then the minister may appoint a conciliator for the parties so making default. There is also a provision for filling vacancies on the board; the party having the right to appoint also having the right to fill up a vacancy.

Assuming that the board of conciliation and mediation has failed to bring about harmony, then the Minister of Labour may refer the matter to arbitration and a board of arbitration is then appointed, which may be the board of conciliation if agreed to by the parties, and if not, then the board of arbitration is appointed in like manner as the board of conciliation. The board is clothed with the power to examine witnesses, to call