

it depends on the man. Some men are young, some are old; some are able to earn \$1.50 a day and some are not. To my mind this is not a matter for parliament to regulate. The effect of passing this resolution would be to give both those who are worthy and those who are not worthy this wage of \$1.50 a day. To say that they should not be employed unless they can earn that amount would be to exclude from the service of the railway this class of labour.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Cape Breton). But this applies to the trackmen.

Mr. MACKINNON. I contend that it is a wrong principle to pass a resolution of this kind, and it seems to me to yield too much to pressure from outside. It would not be fair to those whom we charge with the duty of managing this road. Here is a department in charge of the Minister of Railways, who is fit to direct that department; and he has under him managers who are fit for the work they have to do. To take the matter of wages out of their hands, as you will do if you pass this resolution, is to do something unworthy of parliament.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Cape Breton). This only fixes a minimum.

Mr. MACKINNON. Fixing a minimum or maximum is no part of the duty of parliament. That should be left to the officers of the road. Parliament must not forget other labourers not in government employ who have to contribute towards increased wages. I have every confidence that this question will be fairly dealt with by the Minister of Railways.

Mr. JOHNSTON (Cape Breton). I would like to ask the hon. gentleman a question. He talks of a certain class of labour on the road. But this resolution has reference to the trackman. I would like to ask the hon. gentleman if he knows what the duties of a trackman are? If he does he must know that these duties are very onerous and exacting. If a man is not fit for such duties he could not be employed as trackman.

Mr. MACKINNON. If the hon. gentleman (Mr. Johnston, Cape Breton) will read the whole resolution, he will see that it refers not only to trackmen but to 'other labourers' as well.

Mr. ARTHUR S. KENDALL (Cape Breton). I lay it down as a general proposition that no business should exist in this country unless it can stand on its own bottom. I know that many hon. members of this House will dissent from that proposition. But I make this second proposition, which I do not think many will dissent from when they go before the electors—that no business should exist in any civilized country unless it is able to pay its employees sufficient remuneration to keep them and their families according to the requirements of

civilization. I believe that the people of Canada will support that proposition, particularly with relation to the government, and will hold that the government should not engage in any business, unless it can provide for its employees a sufficient wage to maintain them and their families according to the requirements of civilization. I think the country will believe this also—that where the country itself is a great employer of labour, the government that acts on behalf of the country will be expected to be a model employer. Hon. members may recollect that last session I asked the government, during the recess then to follow, to collect information from other countries—New Zealand, Switzerland, Great Britain and others—with regard to the working out of measures which had for their object the betterment of the conditions of labour, particularly along four lines: (1.) A standard minimum wage; (2.) shorter hours of labour; (3.) compensation for injuries and death; (4.) old age pensions. We have had mention here of the late Henry A. Harper, who was employed in the Labour Department. Before his untimely death, he collected a large amount of information on these subjects, which has been put in my hand. I am glad to see that my hon. friend from Cumberland (Mr. Logan) has dealt with one of these questions, and has brought this resolution before this House. I have given notice of another motion, which, if time permits, I shall refer to later on. Coming back to the question immediately before us—in many of the towns on the Intercolonial Railway, Montreal, Quebec, Moncton, St. John, Amherst, Halifax, New Glasgow, Sydney and others, every one knows that the miserable wage of \$1.20 or \$1.25 a day must keep the men employed on the road and their families almost in a state of beggary. I say again that the people of this country do not wish the government to engage in a business in which they cannot provide for their employees and their families at least sufficient shelter, clothing, food and fuel. Not very long ago, I pointed out where the government railway of this country was losing a huge sum of money every year, which money it might save by getting its coal at fair prices instead of at exorbitant prices as it is doing to-day. I heartily endorse the motion of the hon. member for Cumberland, and I believe the people of Canada, when the question is properly put before them, will endorse it also.

Mr. CHARLES MARCIL (Bonaventure). The grievance complained of by our friends in Nova Scotia exists on the Intercolonial Railway in the province of Quebec, and I have had occasion many times to bring the matter to the attention of the Railway Department but, like my hon. colleague without success. The principle which has been enunciated here this evening that the fixing of the wages of these men should be left to the officials of the railway, is a