

I realize that our railways are in a very serious condition. We should be very glad to assist in any way that would improve their financial condition. But there is such a thing as the march of time. I come from the county of Bruce, and I remember when there was not a single line of railway in that county. In order that the grain grown by the early settlers might be sent to the markets, docks and wharves were built at various points on the lakes. One particular port called Inverhuron was well built up. It had docks, mills and storehouses; it was a thriving village. But when the railways came in and transported the grain, that village was naturally wiped out. To-day it is covered by drifting sand. The people who invested their money in that hamlet for the purpose of shipping grain lost all their investment as a result of the march of time. After that we had the age of buggies, democrats and cutters. Large factories were built up all over Western Ontario for the purpose of constructing these vehicles. To-day they are just empty buildings. The people who invested their money in those plants have lost it. We must not expect to realize on all the investments we make. Progress, which we cannot stop, will prevent us from doing so.

The great improvement that has been made in the building of motor trucks and the construction of highways has had the effect of taking a great deal of the freight traffic from the railways. To my mind that share of the traffic will increase rather than decrease as time goes on, and the Parliament of Canada might just as well enact legislation providing that in the future the St. Lawrence river shall flow west as think seriously that by legislation it can stop the development of progress.

Aside from these objections to the Bill there is another one. It has long been my opinion that different parliaments of Canada—both parties are responsible—have placed on the Statute Book what is called paternal legislation, which has interfered with those who desired to carry on business. Various forms of social legislation have had the effect of depriving our people of their proper initiative and self-reliance. I remember the time when a young man went out into the world with the idea that he had to make good or go under. By passing paternal legislation we have destroyed the ambition of our people, and to-day many young men go out into the world with the idea that it does not matter whether they make good or not, because if they do not the Government will provide them a living. I am strongly opposed to paternal legislation, one form of which is to be found in this Bill.

Hon. J. A. CALDER: Honourable members, I have made three attempts to rise, and now that I am on my feet I am going to stay. I have no desire to catch a train, but I wish to occupy your time for a brief period—and when I say “brief” I mean brief.

Hon. Mr. LACASSE: Train or no train.

Hon. Mr. CALDER: I think we are all agreed as to the importance of this measure. In my opinion it is the most important Bill to come before Parliament this session. I think at this stage we can all agree that there is a very wide difference of opinion as to what should be done with the Bill. The Bill itself is full of difficulties and complexities; it is puzzling in many ways; and all who took part in the committee realized that the problem we had to deal with was not an easy one. Eventually the Bill was moved out of committee and reached this House, and now we must finally dispose of it.

Since the House adjourned yesterday I took the trouble to make a fairly extensive analysis of the problem now confronting this House, and I intended to submit that analysis to you; but for purely personal reasons I no longer have that intention, nor do I think I should attempt to make any extended address at this time.

So far as the main object of the Bill is concerned, I may say that I am in entire sympathy with it. I say that without any reservation whatsoever. I believe in the control of rates. But because I believe in the control of rates it does not necessarily follow that I must agree to the control of rates in every field. A man may believe in that principle as applied to certain public facilities and services, but his belief in it does not compel him to believe that it is opportune, advisable or necessary to apply the principle to other public services.

The Bill before us has been shorn of many features, and there are but two things left to be considered by this House. The proposed legislation as it came to us was very broad in its scope and application. The Bill we now have is different. In my opinion the only two things left to be considered at this time are, first, the control of shipping on the Great Lakes, and, second, the agreed contracts provided for in the Bill, such as are now and have been for some three years in force in Great Britain.

Hon. Mr. DANDURAND: And the control of airways.

Hon. Mr. CALDER: I do not consider that that problem is before us at all.

Hon. Mr. LAIRD: And the highways.