

this to say, and I am now quoting from the Montreal Star of December 2, 1931:

"Honourable R. J. Manion,
Minister of Railways,
Ottawa, Ontario.

Sir, on behalf of 21 general chairmen representing engineers, firemen, conductors, trainmen and telegraphers over 26,000 in number on Canadian railroads, have noted with surprise and sincere disappointment a reference in today's press to the possibility of your government considering the appointment of Sir Joseph Flavelle, of Toronto, as a member of the commission to investigate the Canadian railway situation. I am instructed by this committee to advise you on their behalf that Canadian railroad men would be overwhelmingly opposed to the appointment of Sir Joseph Flavelle on this commission because in our judgment he has always found himself unable to exercise a reasonable view of the rights of individuals as contended for by organized labour and workers generally and to implore your government therefore to refrain from making this appointment."

The above telegram was also sent to the Minister of Labour, who replied by wire on November 14.

A similar telegram was also sent to Right Hon. R. B. Bennett, Prime Minister, and on November 16th, Hon. Geo. H. Perley, Acting Prime Minister, advised that you were replying to our telegram of November 13, and that he concurred with your reply.

On November 19, we received a letter from you, which we noted was dated November 14, and the next day the press carried notice of the appointment of the commission to investigate the Canadian railway situation.

We now desire to reaffirm our position as outlined in above telegram, and also to express on behalf of the 26,000 Canadian railroad workers whom we represent, the dismay and disappointment which they and we feel in the appointment on this commission of the member named from the United States. Our reasons are as follows:—

1. The gentleman named is now and has been for more than a quarter of a century known and noted by organized labour as its most bitter opponent.

2. He has by his continued opposition to anything emanating from, or connected with organized labour, made it impossible to secure adherence to wage agreements on his own line.

3. He has been ever ready to lead a battle or opposition against organized labour, its views and its claims, when others were doubtful of the justice of such course.

4. He is the only railway chief executive on this continent (in our judgment) who requires and insists on employees of the various classes on a portion of his through line, working for lower wages than similar classes of employees on the remainder of the line this being done on the pretext that those employees, who are underpaid, are on a separate chartered railway. We refer to the Napierville Junction railway in the province of Quebec, a part of the main line of the Delaware & Hudson railway from Montreal to New York.

5. Some months ago this gentleman prepared and submitted a grouping plan for consideration and adoption by the Interstate Commerce Commission, in which the Delaware & Hudson railway was proposed as the dominating com-

[Mr. Heenan.]

ponent part of the group. That proposal was treated by the Interstate Commerce Commission and by other railway operating heads as it deserved.

Thus, in our judgment, you have placed on this railway commission, the most pronounced opponent of labour's rights and claims in Canada, and a similar choice has been made from the United States.

We know that not only the men in the classes specified above, but practically all of the more than one hundred thousand railway employees in Canada will be seriously disturbed by the appointments referred to.

Labour expects no special consideration but does hope for reasonable unbiased judgment where its interests are vitally concerned, as in this case.

I have the honour, on behalf of these 21 general chairmen, to be, sir,

Yours respectfully,

(Sgd.) J. B. B. Ward,

Chairman of

General Chairman's Conference Committee.

These men, Mr. Speaker, are not politicians. They are divided about equally—

Mr. MANION: But the protest came in after the commissioners were chosen.

Mr. HEENAN: I will leave the record to speak for itself. I got the letter which I have just quoted from the Montreal Star, and the railroad men say no. But taking the minister's own word, has he and the government no more regard for the lives and living conditions of the railroad men of this country than to appoint a commission of this kind without the railroad men having a single representative on it? I notice that the minister in his remarks took credit to the government and to his department for practically everything that was favourable with respect to the Canadian National Railway.

Mr. MANION: Oh, no.

Mr. HEENAN: On the other hand he has credited to the management everything of an unfavourable character. He tells us of our railways looking for the wrong kind of traffic, as if our railway managements were not the best in the world. Then he told us of the economy committee and that the Minister of Railways himself is represented on it, and he cited the economies that committee has put into effect, amongst them the ten per cent cut in wages.

Mr. MANION: I did not. The economy committee I quoted as cutting down capital expenditure. The economies the hon. member referred to were effected by the management, and I said so. I do not wish to be misquoted.