

The **MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND CANALS**. I said I passed it through in a routine way, because I did not pretend to understand the details of these matters. They are looked at and reported upon by the Deputy Minister and his officers as carefully, I have no doubt, as any other matter that comes before them.

**Mr. WALLACE**. At any rate, the matter came before him in the usual way for approval and was forwarded to the Governor in Council.

The **MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND CANALS**. And the hon. gentleman assumed from this that they were scarcely looked at at all.

**Mr. WALLACE**. I gathered that from what the Minister said. I do not wish to misrepresent him. The Minister gave the House to understand that this was considered a matter of very minor importance, and, in the rush of business that was going on, did not receive the consideration to which it was entitled. The hon. Minister was not seized of the importance of the matter. That is what I gather from what he said, and I think his words will fairly justify that interpretation. But this is an important matter. It is important for the safety of the trainmen and of the travelling public, and it is an important matter if the Minister has consented to a change in the regulations which will Americanize our railways and work to the injury of those railways and their Canadian employees.

**Mr. HUGHES**. I have taken occasion to look into this matter in the town in which I live, which is a large railway centre; and I find that the regulations bring about a certain change in signals, and that until the men get thoroughly posted in the new system, there is a possibility of accidents. But, presuming the men get used to the changes, I think there will be no trouble whatever. While some of the men in the town in which I live feared at first that the changes would be undesirable, now that they have examined them they are unable to point out anything very seriously wrong with the new rules. This is a good deal as it was when Mr. Hays became the general manager of the road. As was natural, Mr. Hays brought in a number of officers accustomed to his system of running a railway to take charge of important positions on the road. The cry at once went out that every conductor and every trainman was going to be dismissed and replaced by a Yankee. But I can say that in our whole district not one man on such account has been dismissed. On the contrary, Mr. McGuigan, Mr. Hays and the chief engineer, have watched the men, and wherever they have found a deserving man in that district, they have not only retained him, but, in many instances, they have advanced such men to very high positions in the service, taking

advantage of every opportunity to give the local officers promotion. Besides, in some cases—I was going to say many, but I can say at least in some cases—they have taken men from our system and put them on the general system of the company even in Michigan, giving them good positions. I have examined the rules carefully, and the only danger that I can see in them will arise during the time when the men are learning the new system of signals. It is possible then for accidents to occur, as the signals differ from those that the men have been accustomed to.

**Mr. CASEY**. I had a notice on the paper of a question on this subject, which, I believe, was allowed to stand at the request of the Government.

The **MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND CANALS**. The hon. gentleman (Mr. Casey) was not here.

**Mr. CASEY**. I was not aware that it was coming up to-day or that this discussion was coming up. Without asking for a categorical answer now to the question I proposed to ask, I would say that I have heard complaints from the railway men in the district where I live that changes were made in the rules of the service calling for longer hours than necessary for the performance of the employees' duties, and, therefore, not only oppressive to the men, but inconsistent with the safety of the public as well. There have also been complaints about the change in signals which has been referred to. It stands to reason that sudden change of methods of signalling is apt to cause confusion and accidents. My object in the questions I desired to ask was simply to have the whole subject ventilated. No doubt, when I have an opportunity to ask the questions, the Minister can give a full statement with regard to it. I can quite understand that a matter of this kind should pass the department in a routine way, as has been mentioned, without anybody's attention being called to it. But I was also given to understand that some of the employees of the Grand Trunk Railway had asked, through certain representatives of their own, to be heard before the Minister, or whoever should hear them, on the subject of these rules. I hope the Minister will be able to give a full explanation when he comes to answer the questions. I have no doubt these rules are subject to such modifications as an expert would decide to be in the interest of the public and of the men, as well as of the railway company. Of course, the Government's control of these rules has been largely nominal at all times, for the simple reason that nobody in the department was a railway expert in this sense. But what I would suggest is that in the future, before such rules and regulations are approved of, those interested on the other side of the question,