

this nation. There can be no doubt that it is having serious repercussions not only upon the travelling public but also upon the primary producers and on the jobs of thousands of workers who depend for employment on parts and materials which are shipped by rail. Consequently, this house is properly seized of the importance of dealing with this matter.

It seems to me equally true that there is no doubt as to why we face this serious crisis. This is one of the government's chickens that has come to roost. The government's failure to cope with the problem of the maldistribution of our national income, the fact that the government has done nothing about profiteering and soaring prices charged the consumers of Canada, have had an adverse affect upon the farmers, the fishermen, the workers, and particularly upon those who have to live on fixed incomes. Moreover, there has been no serious attempt to avert this strike. There has been no genuine bargaining on the part of the railway companies when one realizes that bargaining began ten months ago and that in all that period of time the railways have not made a single offer of settlement to the employees.

The other evening on the national television the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) said that certainly the railway employees were entitled to an increase in wages. Both the Munroe and the Cameron commissions said that the employees were entitled to an increase in wages. However, for ten months the railways have refused to acknowledge that any increase at all should be given to their employees. This has been ten months of frustration and resentment. It was inevitable that out of this feeling of frustration a strike would undoubtedly come.

Mr. Speaker, workers do not go on strike for fun. These particular unions, I understand, have no provisions for strike pay. Workers depend upon their weekly wages to support themselves and their families. It is only under the most extreme provocation that workers finally decide to walk the streets. The fact is that in this instance, as in previous railway strikes, the railway companies have deliberately invited a strike because they have used a national railway strike as a means of blackmailing the country into giving them increased revenue. Repeatedly over the past half century the railway companies have stalled negotiations and provoked a strike so that parliament would have to intervene. Then they have sent the wage bill to

#### *Legislation Respecting Railway Matters*

parliament in the form of either asking for a government subsidy or asking parliament to sanction increases in freight rates. We might as well face the fact as to where the culprit is.

In this country the Canadian Pacific Railway has exploited its employees, milked Canadian shippers and raided the federal treasury ever since the day it was born. It has continued to do that throughout its history with the connivance of both the major political parties in this country. We have seen this ritual dance performed again and again. The railways stall, a strike takes place, hysteria is rampant, parliament rams through legislation, men go back to work, some settlement is imposed, and then parliament is told by the railways: You must give us more money to pay the wage bill which you have caused us to incur. This could be called the mating dance of avarice and expediency. Every step is carefully rehearsed and the conclusion is well known in advance. The one thing you can be sure of is that the public is the one that gets ravished.

Of course, the governments we have had, whether they were Liberal or Conservative, have each in turn condemned this practice when they were in opposition and practiced it when they were in office. In 1950 the St. Laurent government introduced compulsory arbitration to settle a national railway strike. This, of course, was opposed by the Conservative opposition.

In 1960, to prevent another national railway strike, the Diefenbaker government imposed compulsory arbitration, and the members who sit on the front bench to your right, Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister, the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Martin) and the Minister of Transport (Mr. Pickersgill) waxed eloquent about this violation of civil rights and this denial of the basic freedom of collective bargaining. Now we have the same gentlemen introducing another compulsory arbitration law and it is being opposed vigorously by the same party which in 1960 introduced a similar measure.

• (4:40 p.m.)

The unfortunate part about this ritualistic dance is that in every case the government in office at the time has allowed the situation to deteriorate to the point where hysteria and a crisis psychology put parliament in the position that it must pass compulsory legislation and put the Canadian people on the spot where they can be blackmailed into giving the railways more money. It is bad enough,