

them of the case of another railway company having negotiated with the same body in which a successful settlement had been reached, it had rushed in and tried to compel an arbitration which the men themselves had indicated would only help to precipitate an element of danger into the whole situation? I say if the government had taken the course which the hon. member in moving this resolution has suggested they should have taken, I think the hon. member might have brought in the resolution which he has here, and have very properly condemned the government for being too precipitous, too officious, and for preventing the parties themselves from coming together and effecting a settlement which might have averted the strike. So I say as to the first part of the resolution which my hon. friend has moved and which expresses regret that the government had not endeavoured in any intelligent way to avert a strike on the Grand Trunk railway, he is wrong in two particulars: he is wrong first of all in the method he suggests should have been taken by the government, for I claim that is a wrong method, and he is wrong in stating that no effort whatever was made inasmuch as when the demands of the men were presented these demands were made a subject of investigation by a board which was appointed by the government and then the government from the time the board's award was given up to the time the strike took place, held out an offer continuously to each side in the dispute to lend its good offices in any way that would be acceptable to the two parties.

There seems to be just as little ground for criticism of the government's action as respects the second charge contained in this amendment, namely that the government had wholly failed to put an end to the strike during its continuance. Just here I would call the attention of the House to a curious contradiction in the motion of my hon. friend. He wishes to condemn the government on every possible side, first of all for the strike, secondly for not ending the strike, and thirdly for not having had the agreement carried out. But he finds himself in this dilemma that to hold the government responsible for the agreement being carried out, he has in some way to make the government responsible for the agreement itself. So he is put in the curious position of being obliged to admit that the government did bring about a settlement of the strike when he tries to hold it responsible for not having the terms of the settlement fully carried out. On the other hand, when he wishes to make his denunciation wholesale, he says the government are to blame for not putting an end to the strike during its continuance. Follow the two clauses of my hon. friend's motion. He says that the

government have 'wholly failed . . . to put an end to it during its continuance', and he goes on to say: 'or to compel Mr. C. M. Hays, the president of that railway, to effectively carry out the agreement made with the government, on the faith of which . . . the men at once offered to resume their service with the company'. Either one of these two clauses must be wrong, both to my mind are wrong but either of them is certainly wrong and it must appear so to every one who reads them. If the government did not put an end to the strike then the government can not be held responsible for the terms of an agreement that, according to the third paragraph of the amendment, it is supposed to have drawn up and as a result of which the men returned to work. On the other hand, if the government did draw up an agreement as a result of which the men returned to work, then the second clause of my hon. friend's amendment, namely, that the government did not put an end to the strike, falls absolutely to the ground.

Just a word as to what the government did do when the strike took place. It was the 18th of July when the men decided to go out. On the night of the 18th of July an order was issued from Montreal to all the railway trainmen and conductors from Portland on the Atlantic to Chicago, half way across the continent, and the whole Grand Trunk railway system throughout that entire distance, including something like 4,000 miles of railway, was completely tied up. The number of men who went out at that time totalled 3,450 and then, a day or two following, after the company had closed its shops at Quebec and other points, the total number who were out in consequence of the strike was 8,500. What was the situation on the morning of the 19th of July? Between 8,000 and 9,000 men were out, an entire railway system was completely tied up, not a passenger or freight train moving from one end of it to the other and this over something like 4,000 miles of railway system. That was a position to which the government could not be indifferent. I have already said that I do not think it the business of the government to interfere once the board has issued its award, unless the case is exceptional, but I contend that in this particular case the situation was exceptional. This was one of the first strikes of any magnitude that had taken place since this legislation was passed, and when it became apparent that the whole railway system of the Grand Trunk was going to be effectively tied up it became the duty of the government to do what it could to relieve the situation. My hon. friend, in suggesting what might have been done, said that he did not see why the government did not