

Mr. Barbour) and the honourable gentleman from Regina (Hon. Mr. Wood) said recently in this chamber about the high cost of living. They said that the number of working hours have no relation to this question of the high cost of living, unless it be that the more hours you work the quicker you eliminate the problem.

It is my understanding that a 48-hour week has been in existence for a long time, and as far as I know there has never been a shorter working week. There is no doubt that relief would have been granted at once had the men proved that in addition to the wage increase they must have a reduction in hours, because under present working conditions they cannot preserve their health while putting in a 48-hour week. But I have never heard of a suggestion of that kind. Naturally a 40-hour week would be most desirable if you could get it on the basis of being paid for 48 hours; but I suggest that there is no condition of desperation, oppression or threat to the health of the men to make it mandatory at this critical time for them to demand and receive a 40-hour week. I say that that is not in the picture, and in my submission such a claim at the present time does not justify the imposition of the tremendous increase in cost that would fall upon the railways. I understand that the increase in wages would amount to \$80 million a year. I understand that the Department of Labour has made a computation which shows the amount to be not much less than that.

Now, we are not unaware of the facts. The revenues and expenditures of the railways have been given in evidence before the Transport Board, and we know that the companies are not making money on their operations at the present time. It is common knowledge that every dollar of increased cost imposed upon them as a result of concessions made in this dispute must come out of the people in the form of higher freight rates. In this connection it is well to bear in mind the thoughtful and accurate remarks made yesterday by my honourable friend from Regina (Hon. Mr. Wood). It is really possible to kill the goose that lays the golden egg. There is a very serious danger now facing both railway companies and the people—for the people have a heavy investment in one of the roads—it is the possible inability of the companies to meet the threat to their existence from other forms of transportation. It may very well be that farmers on the prairies as well as other producers will find it impossible to pay the increased freight rates resulting from the concessions forced upon the railways, and that consequential curtailment of railway operations might end in the concessions reacting

against the men themselves. I say, honourable senators, that the men would not have needed to strike in support of their demand for increased wages if that demand had not been associated with one for a shorter working week. That concludes what I have to say on the first reason why the strike was not justified.

The second reason is that the decision to strike was a repudiation of the conciliation board's findings. Mr. Hall appeared before the boards as representative of most of the unions concerned. The chairman of both boards was Mr. Justice Wilson of the Supreme Court of British Columbia, and in the report he made on one case he was supported by another member of that board, Mr. Isaac Pitblado. A minority report was made by the third member, a lawyer—no doubt a man of distinction—whom I do not know. I do know Mr. Justice Wilson and Mr. Isaac Pitblado. Mr. Justice Wilson is regarded as one of the most brilliant men who have ever sat on our Supreme Court in British Columbia. He is not a product of what is commonly called the capitalist group. The son of a lawyer who became a county court judge, he grew up in the atmosphere of a small railway town in the interior of the province. After practising law for some years he himself was also appointed to the County Court Bench, and so outstanding was his work there that the federal government took the unusual course of promoting him to the Supreme Court. From my knowledge of him I am sure that as Chairman of the conciliation board he dealt honestly, impartially and in a spirit of fairness with all the matters brought before him. This would be the opinion of everyone who knows him. I have already named one of the other members of the board, that noble old gentleman Isaac Pitblado. It is true that he is counsel for the Canadian Pacific Railway, but I cannot conceive that anyone of his wide experience, honesty and fairness would ever put his name to a report that he did not conscientiously believe to be right and fair to the men as well as to the companies.

Hon. Mr. Moraud: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. Farris: Mr. Justice Wilson was also Chairman of the other conciliation board, in whose majority report he was supported by Mr. Meighen. I have not met Mr. Meighen, but many of us here had the great privilege of knowing his father when he was leader of the opposition in this house. The majority report of both boards was in favour of an increase in wages of about 6 per cent and a 44-hour week.

So little reference has been made to what Mr. Justice Wilson said in both boards' report