

dollars in national revenue in Canada. Therefore I say that this strike is national in scope.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Boulanger): Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but his time has expired.

Mr. Charles Turner (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his kind words. It is not correct to say that we have done nothing. The fact is that this matter is exclusively under provincial jurisdiction. In spite of that fact, the minister did contact the Ontario government to indicate the serious implications which this prolonged strike was having and to indicate our interest. Of course, this would automatically leave the impression that if the Ontario government felt we could be of any help, despite the fact that it is within its jurisdiction it could contact us; but to this date it has not done so.

With respect to the situation in Ontario, the meetings under the auspices of the Department of Labour were recessed about ten days ago, with no plans made for resumption. However, we are told that the mediators are continuing to explore every avenue of settlement and there is a possibility of further meetings taking place within the next few days. It has been reported that a group of contractors has asked the provincial authorities to appoint an industrial inquiry commission.

There is no change in the Alberta situation. The last information we had indicated that the Alberta Construction Labour Relations Association was going to present evidence of vandalism and threats of violence to the attorney general's department. Various employer groups have asked the provincial government to take steps to end the strike in Alberta.

Regarding the situation in British Columbia, the union's appeal against the B.C. Supreme Court ruling that the strike is illegal was set down for a hearing in the B.C. Court of Appeal on February 22. The union has said that no return to work directives have been issued to union members, and any decision in this respect was left up to the individual employees. Top officials of the union have been meeting with the provincial minister of labour. Quebec is the only province so far that has ordered striking employees back to work. There is little information from Nova Scotia, Manitoba and Saskatchewan, which seem to be watching events in Ontario where the main negotiations have been taking place and where any settlement reached will apply to the other provinces.

An editorial in the *Globe and Mail* of February 15 suggested:

—that the dispute has lasted as long as it has chiefly because an international union and international elevator companies have made up their minds to use the Canadian situation as an experimental laboratory—to have a controlled strike here to fight for issues that are a future goal in the United States.

The Ontario mediators have advised us that this is untrue, because the Canadian companies have already offered the union more than was gained in the U.S. settlement. In conclusion I wish to state that the strike does not come under the provisions of part V of the Canada Labour Code (Industrial Relations) but is a matter strictly within the jurisdiction of all the provinces.

25789—43½

Adjournment Debate

CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS—ALLEGED SLOWDOWN BY VANCOUVER YARD CREWS—REASON FOR LOWER PRODUCTIVITY

Mr. Mark Rose (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, some of us are old enough to recall that to be part of railroading was to be part of an industry with a great deal of glamour. Everybody had heard of the great railway tycoons who, like kings, industrialists and leading politicians of the day had their own lavishly appointed private coaches. For the kids close to, but from both sides of the tracks, the railroad engineers, if not kings, were certainly the princes of the road. To be one of those princes in charge of all those mighty toots and puffs of black smoke and to wave pontifically down to people below was part of the vision and dream of most young boys.

The romance that was railroading, for a time at least, assisted the railroads materially in worker recruitment, because even if one never rose to become prince of the locomotive cab, you could at least be near to him and be part of this great and marvellous industry. Men flocked to railroad jobs, therefore, in search of steady work, of pensions which were relatively rare in those days and, at the end of your career, of the best possible prize for a working man—the celebrated gold watch.

I don't know whether working for railroads was any better in the old days than it is now. In fact, I very much doubt it. Probably railroads were able to attract and retain workers in earlier days because most other jobs were far worse. But what I do know is that railroaders in my constituency are not a happy lot. The engineers are concerned with lack of safety provisions in the Fraser canyon, and for yard workers wages have slipped in the past two decades from second to twenty-seventh for industrial workers. Railways pay lousy pensions, and many workers feel that they are poorly represented by a union from which there is no escape. Here is what one of my constituents wrote and why I raised my question when the subject of the west coast slowdown came before the House last Tuesday:

We are in the position whereby our switch crews are being reduced from three men, one foreman and two helpers, to two men, by eliminating one helper. This is being done in accordance with a duly signed agreement. The agreement was signed by our general chairman (business agent) because the only other alternative was to go through negotiations which would ultimately be finalized by the Railway Board of Arbitration. Under the laws of the land the arbitrator, Mr. J. F. Weatherill, can only rule on whether or not a crew can work safely while reduced.

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He has ruled that production, or loss of same, is the responsibility of the railway company. Furthermore, the ratio of cases won by the company to cases won by the union before this arbitrator, is about nine to one. Facing this, and the fact that the railway company grossly misrepresents the cases before the arbitrator, our general chairman advised us the best thing to do would be to negotiate an agreement that would gradually phase the two man crews into the greater Vancouver terminal. This was done in Edmonton, Alberta, in July, 1972.

In brief, my information suggests that even in situations where the arbitrator has ruled that safety demands the crews handle only one car at a time, great pressure is put on the men to ignore this ruling because of the CNR's preoccupation with productivity.