

knowledge that for some considerable time the railways have been investigating to what extent they can amalgamate their services in various parts of the country. I understand that this amalgamation extends to the joint use of terminal facilities both in freight and passenger service, as well as the amalgamation of the freight and passenger services themselves.

Therefore I should like to ask the minister if he is in a position to tell this committee how far the railways have gone up to the present in regard to amalgamating their services; what the probable effect will be in regard to the number of men who may be laid off, and further what financial saving is expected after this cooperation is put into full effect.

Mr. MANION: I am afraid my hon. friend is asking a rather difficult question. He is as familiar as I am with the statements that have been made by various persons as to the savings that may be made by amalgamation. This is not amalgamation, but there is no doubt that through cooperation there will be a considerable saving, and no doubt some of that saving will be brought about by the laying off of a certain number of men. I have no idea how many men will be affected in this way, but I am convinced that if business revives as we hope it will in the near future, instead of the railways even under cooperation laying off men they will be taking them on. My conviction is that when business comes back to anything like normal, not necessarily to the peak year of 1928, the railways will take on thousands of men no matter what may be done in regard to cooperation.

I cannot give my hon. friend the number of men who probably will be laid off; I do not think anyone in the country could give that figure at this time. I do not suppose either Mr. Beatty or Mr. Hungerford could say how many men are likely to be affected. In the first place any cooperation that may take place must be agreed to by the two railways; then it is put into effect, and until that is done naturally nothing like definite figures can be given.

Mr. HEAPS: The reply of the minister is very unsatisfactory; he bases his statement on ifs and hopes. These have not proved very satisfactory in the past two or three years. It is not much satisfaction to the men who are to be laid off if they are told to hope that prosperity will return in the near future; neither is it satisfactory to tell them that if conditions get a little better than they are to-day they may not be laid

off. We do know that the president of the Canadian Pacific railway told a meeting in Winnipeg a short time ago that if amalgamation were carried out the railways could get along with from seventy to seventy-five per cent of the present staff. Under a complete amalgamation of these two systems that would mean the laying off of about forty thousand employees. On the other hand, if we do not have complete amalgamation but get as close to it as possible by means of cooperation—though I cannot see the difference between amalgamation and cooperation—we should be able to get a proportionate figure. So far as I can see, having in mind the service between Montreal and Chicago to which the minister referred, there is no difference between amalgamation and cooperation; it makes no difference to the men concerned what you may call it. They only know that they are to be laid off as a result of the two railway companies working together.

I think, Mr. Chairman, that this is the weak point in this method of dealing with this bill. My claim is that if the bill had been submitted to one of the railway committees or to a special committee of the house we could have heard the experts of the two companies, and could have obtained some idea as to what the financial saving would be and as to the estimated number of men who would be laid off. The first question addressed to the minister to-day brought the answer that he had no information to give us. If the Minister of Railways is not in a position to give the committee any information on the most vital point of the whole bill I say we should rise and report progress until the minister has the information the committee desires.

Mr. MANION: No one in the world could give that information; it is asking for the impossible.

Mr. HEAPS: It is not impossible at all. If Mr. Beatty can tell the Winnipeg board of trade that forty or forty-five thousand men would be laid off as a result of amalgamation I imagine he could give us almost identical figures as to what would be done in regard to cooperation.

Mr. MANION: I must say that I read Mr. Beatty's speech, and I do not remember seeing any such statement.

Mr. HEAPS: I quoted his exact words when I discussed the matter on the motion for second reading. Mr. Beatty's words were to the effect that the two lines could get