

a communication on the subject from a gentleman who is not a member of this House, but who appears to be very much interested on behalf of the railway employees, and since then I also heard from the hon. member for West Elgin on this same subject. In point of fact, it is quite new to me. It was quite new to me when mentioned by my first correspondent to whom I have just alluded. It was new to me, perhaps, in a sense, but should not have been entirely new, because in the way of formal routine it had gone through my hands. Early in February last an application was made in the usual way by the Grand Trunk Railway to my department for the approval of certain new regulations, or rather a body of regulations, some of which, it was said, were in amendment of the previous regulations approved by the Governor General in Council. These regulations were examined by the officers of my department in the usual way and recommended to me for submission to the Governor General in Council, as being only changes in minor particulars of the former schedule of rules. The regulations were therefore approved as is usual and customary. Since then, however, I have been advised by the correspondent to whom I have alluded to some time ago—he does not state when, perhaps a year ago—the Grand Trunk Railway were contemplating some changes in their regulations, and had communicated with the right hon. First Minister and myself, informing us that some such movement was in contemplation, and asking that before the action of the Grand Trunk Railway was endorsed by the Governor General in Council, those opposed to it might be heard on the subject. I must confess that the statement that such a request had been made to me was not according to my own recollection. I really do not carry in my mind that any such formal or informal request had been made to me, nor was the right hon. First Minister able to recollect that any such request had been made to him. I would be very sorry, however, to question the accuracy of the statement, because it might very well be that in the pressure of work the matter had not impressed itself on my mind.

Mr. WALLACE. Is there any correspondence on file?

The MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND CANALS. It has not been stated to me that there is, and if there had been any communication, I think without doubt it would have been regularly filed and have attracted the attention of the deputy head of the department, who would then have mentioned it to me when the subject came to be dealt with. However, as the matter now stands, I am quite unaware of what the nature is of the objections made by the employees to the existing regulations. I cannot think that my hon. friend has fully informed himself either in respect of the

nature of those changes, and I think it would be premature, in the absence of reliable data on which to form an opinion, for either myself or my hon. friend to assume that what has been done is objectionable or in the nature of revolutionary changes. I think it would be well for us to fully possess ourselves of the facts before we reach any conclusion, assuming that the newspaper reports are correct or that the Grand Trunk Railway Company has made itself subject to any criticism on account of what they have done. I have already given assurance that the subject will receive my immediate attention, and it is my purpose to give it my immediate attention: and if there has been anything done calculated to inflict injury on the employees of the road, by reason of these regulations having been approved of, proper steps will be taken to redress their grievances. The hon. gentleman and those interested in the subject may rest assured that it will not be lost sight of.

Mr. WALLACE. The hon. Minister says that I should have acquainted myself with the facts and should not have relied upon what appeared in the newspapers. What I saw in the newspaper was the statement that the rules and regulations submitted by the general superintendent have been approved of by the Governor General in Council, and I assume that to be correct.

The MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND CANALS. That is correct.

Mr. WALLACE. These have been approved by the Governor in Council. Then, as to whether they are oppressive or not, I have here a representation made by the trainmen. This is not by the newspapers or by myself, but by the men employed, the men whose lives are at stake and who are interested therefore in these rules and regulations. They have received these rules and, having read them over, they condemn them, because, as I have already pointed out, they make the traffic more dangerous for the men and more dangerous for the passengers. Besides, they have the effect of introducing the American system into Canada, and the men claim that there is no system—on this continent, at any rate—that gives greater safety to the travelling public and to the employees than the Canadian system. Therefore, the Government should have been slow to consent to any changes. But the Minister of Railways tells us that these rules came up before his officers in a casual way; they were looked at in a casual way, and, when they came before him—

The MINISTER OF RAILWAYS AND CANALS. I suppose the hon. gentleman (Mr. Wallace) desires to state correctly what I said. I said these were looked at by my officers in the usual way.

Mr. WOOD (Brockville). I think the hon. Minister said in a routine way.

Mr. BLAIR.