

Honourable members, I see trouble in this Bill. You cannot put a strangle-hold on the people of the West without their protesting most vigorously. If the Government desires to help the West let it bring down a Bill to reduce freight rates. The railways have my sympathy, but to a large extent it is their own fault that they are in their present position. They have over-built, they have spent money on betterments of their lines, they have built large and luxurious hotels, while we in the West have been struggling to make ends meet. We have been doing our utmost to hold the country intact and save the situation.

There are many other matters pertaining to Western conditions which I should like to go into, but time will not permit. I hope that honourable members from Eastern Canada who know the West by riding through it in a Pullman car will so amend this Bill as to give the people out there a chance to save the country from ruin.

A few years ago, honourable senators, when travelling between here and Winnipeg you would see train-loads of cattle en route to Montreal; also you would meet train-loads of commodities in transit from Montreal to the West. In those days the country was rich and fertile and there was plenty of rural and urban activity. The raising of freight rates has brought about a disastrous change, and to-day you will not meet the train-loads of cattle as in early days. I shall not enter into a discussion of the live stock industry or its importance to the West, but I do hope honourable senators will bear that industry in mind and not allow the Bill to pass in its present form. The honourable Minister of Transport is a personal friend of mine, and I do not like the idea of opposing his Bill, but when it comes to a choice between this Bill and the settler on the land out west I shall not hesitate to vote against the motion for third reading.

Hon. JAMES MURDOCK: Honourable senators, the discussion for the past hour or more proves once again that self-preservation is the first law of nature. Several distinguished senators from the West have followed one another in opposition to this Bill, which, as I understand it, contemplates reasonable and consistent regulation of freight and passenger rates. My honourable friend the senator from Saskatchewan North (Hon. Mr. Horner), as I understood him, attributed the troubles of the railroads, which it is alleged this Bill is to help, to the out-of-gear

Hon. Mr. MULLINS.

wage rates paid to railway employees, and he said that in the West men got \$20 a month.

Hon. Mr. HAIG: Who said that?

Hon. Mr. MURDOCK: I wonder if the honourable gentleman would care to have, when he goes home for the Easter holidays, a \$20 a month engineer on the front end of the train that he travels on. I wonder if, in the event of the train stopping in the middle of the night, he would care to have a \$20 a month flagman to get out to protect his life while he sleeps. I wonder if he would like to have a \$20 a month man performing important transportation duties involved in the safe conduct of the business of Canada. I am of the opinion that my honourable friend does not know a single thing that is really essential with respect to wage rates per day or hour, or according to years of experience. It must not be forgotten that there are hundreds—yes, I think I could say thousands—of railroad men in this Dominion of Canada who have given from fifteen to twenty-five of the best years of their lives to railroading, in order that they might secure promotions, only to find in many cases that they were without a job because there was no business to do.

I am more than particularly interested in the remarks of my honourable friend the junior member from Winnipeg (Hon. Mr. Haig), who, I see, has left the Chamber. I wanted to ask him what were the vested interests behind this Bill. I can work up—or it has been said I can—considerable enthusiasm against vested interests when it seems to me that they are acting detrimentally to the interests of the consuming public, or the people of Canada.

If we are going to talk about vested interests let us take into consideration a little bit of history. The honourable junior senator from Winnipeg (Hon. Mr. Haig) admitted that this Bill contemplated assisting the railways. He said, not once but several times, I think, that the railways would not get a dollar out of it. He may be right. But what about the vested interests he is pointing at in connection with this Bill? I presume they are in the provinces of Ontario and Quebec. On the other hand, is there any part of Canada which to-day has a greater responsibility for the condition of the railways at present and for several years past than the noisy, vociferous public in the great West and its representatives in the Senate and the House of Commons? They, and they alone, in my judgment, are responsible for a great pro-