

Industrial Relations Act

and also the economic impact of the move on the community itself in which the industry is situated. This must all be taken into consideration well in advance of the change.

What I am advocating is that management should not decide to modernize on a Friday and notify labour on Monday about a *fait accompli* involving the dismissal of workers after 15 to 20 years service. What I am advocating is complete and early co-operation before decisions such as this are taken in the more realistic light of a modern day, competitive spirit.

● (5:50 p.m.)

Mr. J. A. Byrne (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Fawcett) is an expert railroader for whom all of us have a very high regard. He is probably destined to make a contribution to this house and to the public service of Canada along with some other very distinguished employees of Canadian railway companies. I have found through my associations that members of the Committee on Transport and Communications are broadminded, fairminded and certainly well acquainted with the problems of the employees of the railway industry.

I must say that the Freedman report is a far reaching document. It is regrettable, however, that the terms of reference of the commission only allowed the tribunal to deal with a specific question. It is regrettable that he could not have gone farther and made this report in such a way that it would have been applicable throughout all industry. It is significant that this report deals with the railway problem. As a member of the Standing Committee on Transport and Communications I am somewhat dismayed at the distance between management and labour. As was indicated by the witnesses appearing before that committee, it seems that labour is under the impression that whatever management endeavours to do is done in such a way as to ignore completely the employee as such. There does not seem to be the meeting of minds that is characteristic of a more compact industry such as manufacturing and even mining, I believe. That is perhaps because the railway employees are spread right across the country and there is not the opportunity for closer relationships and discussions with top management that there is in more compact industries.

I said earlier that I am amazed that this situation exists to the extent it does, and for that reason something obviously needs to be

done in respect of labour-management relations in both of our great national railways. There is a danger, however, it seems to me, of the government interfering in such a way as to bring in legislation which may have the effect of hampering the development of technological changes such as automation to a greater extent than those changes are now hampered by human antipathy against change of any kind.

For instance, if in 1950 the railways had been required to enter into negotiations with the unions to determine whether it was in the best interests of the railways and of the employees to introduce the diesel locomotive, perhaps this matter could have been rationalized at that level at an early date. However, I fear that this would have led to quite prolonged negotiations because it would have had to be stated at that point that some employees necessarily were going to be displaced. Otherwise there would be no point to the technological improvement brought about by the introduction of diesel locomotives.

If I may be permitted to refer to evidence before the committee, it was early in 1950 that the Canadian Pacific Railway began its studies of the development of their train, the Canadian. That meant that concurrently, of course, there had to be the development of the diesel locomotive. If my memory serves me correctly, it was not until 1955 that the Canadian was established as the C.P.R.'s number one transcontinental passenger service. During that time surely there could have been ample arrangements made to discuss what was going to be the ultimate division of labour along the route both with respect to the Canadian and with respect to the much longer freight trains with several locomotive units being operated by two or three men in the front cab.

If the companies had not been free to study the technology of railway operations without having first received the sanction of the employees, I wonder where railroading would be today. Some time ago I discussed with a railroader why it was that the Canadian Pacific and Canadian National had not adopted earlier two or three-deck flatcars for transporting automobiles. He said that because of the fly ash which came from the steam locomotives of the day it was impossible to have automobiles transported in that fashion.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I regret to have to interrupt the proceedings but the time allotted for the consideration of private members' business has now expired.