

*Railway Operations Act*

**Mr. Douglas:** The hon. member asks if I do not want them to go back to work. I want the men to go back to work, and the best way to get them back is by treating them fairly and justly and giving them a wage that is fair and just, and this bill will not do it.

The minister talked about bidding. We are not talking about bidding. We are not talking about 55 cents; that is what the employees are asking, but the non-ops have indicated they would be prepared to go back to work on the basis of 10.8 per cent in 1973 and 1974. Surely that is the very least they ought to be given.

I agree that here, in the House of Commons, we cannot deal with job security and the pension plan. That is too complicated. We may be able to discuss these matters in some standing committee of the House at a later date. Yet when we are legislating, surely we have the responsibility to legislate a figure that is acceptable to these men.

I do not agree with the right hon. member for Prince Albert who talked about an attempt to blackmail parliament, since I think the officials of the non-op unions were quite right to tell this government what their attitude would be before this legislation was passed, and to say that they are perfectly certain they cannot sell the provisions of this bill to their union members. They would not have been fair to us or to the people of Canada if they had not expressed their views.

I remind the Minister of Labour that this is not a matter of bidding. This is a matter of finding a figure which is not only fair and just, but which is also acceptable. You can lead a horse to water but you cannot make it drink; or, as John L. Lewis said many years ago to President Roosevelt, "You cannot dig coal with bayonets." You cannot force men to work against their will. Ever since the day when Abraham Lincoln freed the slaves, no one on this continent has been compelled to work against his will.

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The railway system is so essential that this parliament is ordering men back to work. If we are going to order them back to work let us do so in terms that are not only acceptable to the men but are acceptable to the Canadian people.

I want to tell the Minister of Labour and the Minister of Transport that they will live to regret the speeches they made today, and the Liberal party will live to regret them. Not only do the men who are affected feel that the offer made in this legislation is too low, but that is also the reaction across the country. Read the newspaper editorials—get the reports coming in from all over the country which show that the public is convinced that these men are being treated shabbily and that parliament is being asked to use its muscle to impose an unjust settlement.

I want to remind the Minister of Transport, who said this morning "You can't change this thing when you get into committee; we are not going to start changing it in committee of the whole." The President of the Privy Council will recall that in 1966 the Right Hon. Lester B. Pearson brought in a similar piece of legislation to send the railway workers back to the job. He made certain proposals in that legislation, but when it was pointed out to him in the House, and in committee of the whole, that the figure was unacceptable, unfair and unjust, the gov-

[Mr. Railton.]

ernment of that day brought in an amendment and raised it. The result was that the legislation passed and the workers accepted it.

If the government is prepared to accept the figure of 10.8 per cent that we are proposing for each of the years, 1973 and 1974, I think the House would accept it. I think the country would accept it and, most important the workers would accept it and get back on the job. That is the principle task that faces this House—to get a settlement that the workers will accept.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Fortin:** Mr. Chairman, unfortunately it would seem that this extremely important debate will go on and on but the situation remains. We have been called back for an emergency. However, after having heard the remarks of the Minister of Labour (Mr. Munro), it is my duty to speak at this moment and to define certain issues that have been raised.

Mr. Chairman, when we were recalled at a moment when the rotating strike had become a national crisis, people were speaking of the isolated Maritimes provinces, of industries that could not get supplies. What happened? We were recalled here to tell the 56,000 workers "the negotiations have failed, mediation has failed, arbitration has failed and now you will go back to work". And on what conditions? These conditions are set forth in the government bill itself.

The Minister of Labour seems to have forgotten that it is not Parliament that has established the rate of 30 cents or the 5 or 3 per cent. The Minister of Labour should know that it is not the members who have put that in the bill but that he did it himself with his senior officials.

Mr. Chairman, in this manner, the government admitted the power of Parliament to amend this bill, to improve it, because the goal of this Parliament is to establish justice in this country and therefore we submit that we have the right to amend the bill.

If the argument of the Minister of Labour were logical and according to procedure, it would mean that the only power Parliament has is to say to the ministers and to the government: Yes, we approve entirely of your bill. Now, if such were the case, Parliament would no longer be a democratic institution, the hon. member would no longer represent the true interests of the Canadian workers, including railwaymen, and that would mean a total waste of time on our part.

Mr. Chairman, the minister would like Parliament to ratify all of the failures of mediation, of negotiation and of arbitration. Now I do not know what the other parties will do but I know that, for our part, we are here not only to see that 56,000 workers will go back to work, but to stand by an ideology in which we firmly believe, namely that every Canadian citizen should have the right to live decently, to earn a living under healthy and acceptable working conditions. And if the renewal mechanisms concerning the collective agreement, mediation and arbitration have failed to work, it means not that those workers tried to overdo it, but merely that those mechanisms are out of date, that they no longer can cope with the requirements of labour and that it is extremely urgent to modern-