

Mr. MANION: No, I did not mean that he was extreme; I meant that the statement was not so extreme with regard to labour. My hon. friend will find even in the statement which he quoted that Mr. Beatty said:

Therefore, from natural causes, in the event vacancies were not filled, the personnel of Canadian railways would be reduced in five years from twenty-five to thirty per cent, and it would not be possible to administer the unified properties with a staff reduced below seventy-five or seventy per cent of normal.

He uses the word "normal," by which I presume he means the normal number of employees in a normal year. Certainly this is not a normal year, nor have we had one for some time.

Mr. HEAPS: Then his argument in regard to lay-offs and the five per cent turnover also falls to the ground because when employment is scarce the turnover is less, because people do not give up their jobs and look for another. The turnover in employment to-day is much less than it ever was before, because there is so little employment and there are such vast numbers of unemployed. In view of the possible effect of this legislation, could the minister inform the committee as to whether or not the government has given any consideration to compensation for the men who are likely to be affected by the passing of the bill?

Mr. MANION: Undoubtedly individuals in the government have given consideration to the matter. It is debatable however whether this or any other government should take any class of employees, namely railway employees, and compensate them in the event of their being laid off, without making such practice general. I doubt whether my hon. friend is any more anxious than I am to see that in times such as these the unemployed are cared for. I believe any reasonable or charitable man, I was going to any Christian man—I believe I might include any Hebrew gentleman, so that I may not be accused of any discrimination—would take the attitude that the industrialists and public men of Canada should work out a scheme whereby, in depressed times such as these through which we are passing men, whether they be railway employees, or any other class, will not be thrown on the street. I feel that very strongly, and this is not the first occasion upon which I have expressed my views. The first time I made a public statement to that effect was in Windsor about two years ago. Upon that occasion I said that in times like these it is the duty of industrialists and public men to endeavour to look after employees. Un-

fortunately when depression does come upon us it is almost impossible to put such a scheme into effect. When recovery does take place it will be our duty to endeavour to see in the matter of unemployment, that we shall be in a better position if again, unfortunately, we are faced with a depression.

Mr. HEAPS: Let us start now.

Mr. MANION: If I may repeat, I do not believe this or any other government should take the attitude that railway men alone, of all classes in the community, must be looked after if laid off. It would not be proper to give them special attention, and ignore other classes. I realize it is a difficult matter, and I am willing to give it consideration. So far, however, as far as I know, the problem has not been solved.

Mr. HEAPS: I say that this legislation places the railway men in a category different from other employees. They are to be laid off as a result of parliamentary action. We are about to put through parliament a bill, the effect of which will be to lay off a large number of employees. Had there been no act of parliament, the railwaymen would probably have had no grounds upon which to lodge a complaint. In the present instance however there is a distinction which I have no doubt the minister appreciates. It is a fact that as a result of an act of parliament undoubtedly a large number of railway employees will lose their positions. Under the circumstances does the minister not feel that the railwaymen are placed in a category different from that in which they would have been had no legislation been passed?

Mr. HEENAN: Mr. Chairman, the hon. member for North Winnipeg has placed the case before the minister much better than I could have done. I agree with him in everything he has said, and I feel sure that all hon. members on this side of the house hold a similar view.

The bill before the house is not a temporary measure to deal with an emergent situation. As the minister and other members of the government do not like the word "amalgamation" I shall say the legislation is designed to merge for all time the services of the railways in Canada. As I have said before outside of the house, undoubtedly the bill is for the purpose of amalgamating the operations of railway services in Canada. If the government does not like the word "amalgamation" they may use the word cooperation, merging, or any other word they like. The effect would be the same, so far as the men