

In 1938 the Senate appointed a special committee to consider our very serious railway situation. The committee held twenty-three sittings that session. Early in the present session the committee was re-appointed, and it has held fourteen sittings since. When our committee commenced its sittings in 1938, and especially at the beginning of its sittings this session, my possibly biased judgment was that certain distinguished members of the committee were ready to make a report as to what should be done. I admit that I may have been absolutely mistaken in thinking that some men's minds were already made up, but, as I say, I had that firm conviction from the commencement of our hearings in 1938, and I held it more strongly at the commencement of the committee's meetings this year.

At the committee's sittings in these two sessions we heard from various prominent railroad individuals and others. This year we had before us a number of, shall I say, specially picked individuals to give the committee certain information. Incidentally, the terms "unification" and "amalgamation" were used frequently at the committee's sittings, and last evening when my right honourable friend (Right Hon. Mr. Meighen) was speaking I appealed to him to indicate the difference in meaning between the two terms. He was too busy to let me have the information, which I know he could have given off-hand, and so I went for guidance to Funk and Wagnall's New Standard Dictionary of the English Language, where I find these definitions:

Amalgamate—Unite, combine, coalesce, as two parts in growth.

Amalgamation—To form a homogeneous whole or a new body.

Unify—To cause to be a unit or one; reduce to uniformity, unite; view or regard as one.

Unification—The act of unifying or the state of being unified; consolidated.

With my sparse education I am unable even to imagine very much difference between the terms "unification" and "amalgamation." Possibly some other gentleman who is more familiar with English dictionary terms can give me additional enlightenment on that subject later. I was really hoping that my right honourable friend would give me the information last night, but, as I say, he was too busy.

A moment ago I said that this year several special—if I may use the term—hand-picked individuals appeared before the committee. One of them was a very capable professor from Queen's University, who gave the committee voluminous information. As a part-time railroad man I thought some of his facts and reasonings were entirely unacceptable from

Hon. Mr. MURDOCK.

the standpoint of railroad practice, but I am quite sure that many members of the committee regarded his evidence as sound and correct. In order to indicate the extent of his knowledge and experience, may I cite this passage from his evidence as reported at page 22 of the committee's proceedings:

Secondly, even the engineer, who is the most skilled member of the train crew, need not be a person of an unusual skill. A man of sound intelligence could be trained to operate a locomotive in a very short time. In the pre-war period, when the labour force was being rapidly increased, men quite frequently ran as full-fledged engineers after only six months' experience.

At the time that appeared to me to be absolute nonsense. I wonder if any honourable senator and his family would like to start out on the tail-end of a twelve or fourteen car passenger train, representing a million dollars of equipment, with Professor McDougall or some equally capable man as the locomotive engineer.

There also appeared before the committee Mr. Charles W. Peterson, publisher of the Farm and Ranch Review. At page 118 of our proceedings I find the following question and answer:

Q. Mr. Peterson, this morning you made a very splendid argument from your point of view in connection with the extreme necessity of reducing wages. Would you care to suggest about how much you think they should be reduced?—A. No, I would not, sir, because that would be a matter for the system when unified, and is one of the things that would have to be studied. I am not competent to give any information on that at all. When the war broke out there was a reduction of, I think, 15 or 20 per cent.

Again, may I without offence characterize the gentleman's answer as nonsense. Not even a reduction in railway wages of one-half of one per cent was made during the war. How do I know? The day that Canada declared war I was acting as spokesman for a committee in Winnipeg which appeared before a board of investigation, presided over by the late Judge Gunn, of Ottawa. We were contending for an increase in pay and improved conditions of work on behalf of the Canadian Pacific men. As soon as it was announced that war had been declared we were unanimous in stating that we were through with our proceedings; that, for the time being, nothing else mattered than to get on with the war. It was not until October, 1916, when we found that all the industrial undertakings of Canada, the United States and other countries were paying very much higher wages in order to get workers, and these conditions were attracting railroad men from the service, that we undertook to get