

every way to fulfil the duties of such positions properly and with safety to life and property. The mere fact that a man may have had five years' experience as a locomotive fireman or a similar experience as brakeman is not sufficient to qualify him for positions of engine driver and conductor respectively. He must in addition have a fair education, be able to read and write, and have some knowledge of arithmetic. He must have good eyesight and hearing, and he must be intelligent and by his past record have proved himself steady, sober, honest and in every way trustworthy. Some men who have now been working as locomotive firemen or brakemen for many years should never be promoted to drivers or conductors, while others are quite capable of filling such positions with but comparatively short experience as firemen and brakemen. This matter of promoting men to the positions of engine drivers and conductors is one which it would seem safe to leave entirely in the hands of the railway companies, as they are most concerned and interested in the employment of only capable and trustworthy men in such positions.

"The Canadian Pacific require all firemen and brakemen to pass an examination before they are permitted to assume the duties of engineer and conductor respectively, and these examinations have been made much more severe and thorough within the last few years, and the tendency is in that direction."

Mr. POWELL—You are combatting something which is not in that section.

Mr. TAIT—I am pointing out that five years' service is not a necessary qualification. Some men are able to fill the position in two years.

Mr. INGRAM—Would you say three years?

Mr. TAIT—I do not think it is necessary to stipulate any period at all. We are the best judges of that. Supposing to-day that our trainmen or conductors, for instance, who have a separate organization of their own, were to strike, what would we do? We could only put on men as conductors who had served five years, although we might have any number of men who are capable of filling the positions who have only served three years.

Mr. POWELL—They would have you on the hip then?

Mr. TAIT—That is the object. Are there any other questions which you would like to ask me?

Mr. ELLIS—Of course a railway company is like any other person, their desire is generally to employ the best and most competent men they can obtain?

Mr. TAIT—Not only that. We not only make them pass a severe examination before promoting them to positions where the safety of life and property is concerned, but we educate them thoroughly from the earliest grades up. We furnish them with the best literature and the very best articles in the railway papers, sending them to educational courses entirely at our expense with a view, when an opportunity for promotion comes, to promote those men who are best fitted for the positions.

Mr. ELLIS—Without regard to years of service?

Mr. TAIT—In making selections of firemen and brakemen from the shops our people are all instructed, while we lay down no standard, for circumstances alter cases, that they must select the man who will prove fittest for promotion.

Mr. INGRAM—Have you any new men on your road, as conductors, engineers or firemen? A man when new gets certain wages which are increased as he goes on?

Mr. TAIT—We have several. A man is junior for the first year, and then he gets senior pay.

Mr. INGRAM—Have you ever discharged old men because they were getting high pay and put on new men at a lower wage?

Mr. TAIT—No man is discharged except for sufficient cause. If it were otherwise we would have the men up in arms.

Mr. ELLIS—This is very important from the employees' point of view.

Mr. CASEY—Is it necessary here?

Mr. INGRAM—Yes; for in Mr. Maclean's bill in clause 2 railways are to be prevented from employing any men as drivers or conductors who have not been firemen or brakemen for five years.

Mr. CASEY—I see the connection.