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NATIONAL SERVICE WILL BE APPOINTMENT BASIS FOR C. N. R. DIRECTORATE

No Large Salaries Will Be Paid, Hon. C. D. Howe,
Minister of Railways, Tells House. Conserva-
tives Continue Their Attack on Bill. B. C. Lib-
eral Says C.P.R. Official Threatened Him With
"Political Death."

Directors of the Canadian National Railways will be appointed on the "basis of railroad service" and will not be paid large salaries. Hon. C. D. Howe, minister of railways, told the House of Commons. He mentioned \$3,000 or \$4,000 a year as possible salaries and expressed the opinion capable men would be willing to serve for such remuneration if they felt they were performing a service to the nation.

Debate on the railway bill, which substitutes seven directors for the present three trustees continued all day and towards the end of the session the House began to pass the sections through the committee of the whole.

Conservative Protests

Most of the time was occupied with Conservative protests and warnings. Hon. C. H. Cahan, Conservative member for St. Lawrence-St. George, Montreal, dug into Hansard to find a statement of Prime Minister Mackenzie King in 1933 to the effect he would not remove a trustee appointed by the Bennett government if he were performing his duties impartially and well.

This, said Mr. Cahan, made Mr. King a party to the definite pledge given the trustees by Parliament they would not be dismissed except for assigned cause.

Conservative Leader Bennett said the whole purpose of the bill was to get rid of the trustees. A dangerous precedent was being established, one unheard of before in any British Parliament. No cause has been assigned for dismissing the trustees. Hon. C. F. Fullerton, chairman of the trustees had made a statement in defence of his administration which Mr. Howe had admitted was fair and correct. Conservatives recruited Hon. H. H. Stevens, lone member of the Reconstruction party, when they continued their attack on the bill.

"Political Death"

Thomas Reid (Lib., New Westminster) declared a high official of the Canadian Pacific Railway "threatened me with political death" in 1932 if he continued with a freight rates bill. He claimed that private railway system for years had directed political pressure on members of Parliament and he deprecated statements that all pressure related to the government-owned road.

The Reconstructionist, while believing the bill held no solution for railway problems, said a systematic attack had been made on the C.N.R. for four or five years. All the blame for over-building had been heaped on the publicly-owned system. The trustee-system had not been in force long enough to demonstrate results, continued Mr. Stevens. The new set-up would make it more difficult to modernize the railway, particularly to meet bus and truck competition.

All the political pressure in Canada is not concerned with the Canadian National Railways, Thomas Reid (Lib., New Westminster) said.

The Canadian Pacific Railway constantly attempted to bring pressure on members of parliament, the Brit-

ish Columbian declared. In 1931 he introduced a freight rates bill and a high official of the C.P.R. "threatened me with political death if I dared to continue."

In his judgement, the political pressure of the C.P.R. was worse than the approach of a member to the C.N.R.

"Pressure for many years past has been brought to bear on members of this House by the Canadian Pacific," Mr. Reid said. He thought it was time this was disclosed to show all the political pressure did not involve the C.N.R.

The Canadian Pacific, Mr. Reid said, "takes quite an active interest in the political affairs of this country."

The Canadian National Railways were a great national asset and should not be turned over to private interests, particularly at present.

The bill was a retrograde step, said Mr. Stevens. The new system would make it more difficult to modernize the system. Modern railways in other countries had adopted new methods to meet truck and bus competition. Canadian railways had done something in that way but could do a lot more. If they would give quicker, more assured delivery on freight shipments they could get more business, he declared.

Would Fill Up Trains

Passenger rates had been reduced slightly but much could be done to get more business by real lowering. It cost as much to move a train empty as loaded.

A definite lowering of rates would fill up the trains, provide more revenue and in addition would stimulate package freight movements because of purchases made in different places by travellers.

"I must regretfully say I see no forward step in this bill," said Mr. Stevens. "I believe the repeal of the section in the 'Canadian National Canadian Pacific Act which established the trustee system is in fact a retrograde step."

When railway workers were thrown out of work by amalgamating services they should be pensioned, Mr. Reid believed. He suggested the government give consideration to this aspect of the railway problem.

Cannot See Solution

Hon. H. H. Stevens (Recon. East Kootenay) said he could not see a solution for the railway problem in the government legislation, which he feared might be a boomerang.

The three trustees, to be replaced by a board of directors, had given reasonably good services, Mr. Stevens continued. Reasonable results had been obtained under difficult conditions and he did not believe the trustees had sufficient time to demonstrate what they could do.

"Systematic Attack on C.N.R."

Mr. Stevens said there had been "a systematic attack on the C.N.R. in the last four or five years which has been a great handicap to the management."

Canada had too many railways, Mr. Stevens continued. Each company had paralleled the other and built

too many branch lines but, generally the blame was placed on the government-owned system.

To Protect Employees

The management set-up of the Canadian National Railways should not be charged without adequate provision for the protection of employees in the event of displacement by economies or curtailment of operations. C. P. Fullerton, trustee chairman, had a plan for this in mind and the trustee system was established with that in view. Mr. Stevens said. High officials of the Canadian Pacific placed too much stress on unification and not enough on co-operation.

Parliament, he continued, was now asked to repeal the trustee system, established to bring about co-operation. Propaganda for amalgamation had been allowed to go unchallenged as Canadian National officials were not free to speak and the government was silent.

Great National Asset

The present, he declared, was the most possible time for the government to surrender the Canadian National.

Says Red Caps Underpaid

Red Caps employed in railway stations were underpaid, said Herbert Wilson (Con., Hamilton East). In the Union Station, Toronto, out of 60 Red Caps, only 10 received any wages and these received very small pay. The others were dependent on the tips of travellers.

The government through the publicly owned railway was 'encouraging the vicious tipping system.' Further, said Mr. Wilson, the Red Caps, most of whom were young married men, earned so little the city welfare department had to help them to support themselves and their families.

Sees No Hope At All

Thomas L. Church (Cons., Toronto-Broadview) said the government had no mandate to restore political control over the Canadian National Railways. Politics had been the curse of the railway system since it was formed and had been kept out under the trustee system, he declared.

"This bill is going to be the hangman and the undertaker for the Canadian National," said Mr. Church. "I see no hope for the railway at all. We are just going back to the rotten system we had before."

All the old board of directors did was run a "me-too" railway, "me-too" with the C.P.R." Now the Canadian National was to be a "me-too" road again. It was to have directors because the C.P.R. had directors. The old directors moved the head office to Montreal because the C.P.R. had directors. The first thing that should be done was move the head office back to Toronto, a public ownership city where the railway would get support.

A. A. Heaps, (C.C.F., Winnipeg-North) said Mr. Maclellan's statement was just the sort of political pressure which should be avoided if the railway was to be efficient. Mr. Heaps was not enthusiastic about the bill but did not think it would have the dire results predicted by Conservatives. He objected to the management of the railway being changed every time the government changed.

Leaders of all parties in the House of Commons should be called into consultation on the appointment of directors of the Canadian National Railways, Mr. Heaps told the House. He thought there should be a measure of permanency in these posts if the railway was to be run successfully. The present government's action in abolishing the trustee board and appointing new directors might lead to another government making another complete change after the next election. Danger of this might

be lessened by an agreement among all party leaders on a slate of officers.

Take Full Responsibility

Hon. C. D. Howe, minister of railways, rejected the suggestion. He said the government would make all appointments and take full responsibility for them.

Compensation for railway employees displaced by co-operative measures between the railway companies was urged by Mr. Heaps but the minister said that was a matter for agreement between the railway management and their employees. Mr. Howe said the same people who wanted the railway kept out of government control frequently urged government interference as Mr. Heaps was doing.

Such railway workers would lose their jobs by reason of an act of Parliament and Parliament had some responsibility to them, said Mr. Heaps. In the United States the government had intervened and under threat of legislative action had compelled the railways to enter an agreement providing for compensation to employees through co-ordination of railway services.

Compensation Principle

The principle of compensation had been recognized in other spheres of government activity, where employees had been displaced, and J. S. Woodsworth (C.C.F., Winnipeg North Centre) felt the principle should operate in circumstances where C.N.R. employees had been dismissed for reasons of economies. The proper claims of these employees should be protected, the C.C.F. leader said.

The government came to Parliament seeking funds to pay interest on C.N.R. bonds to the bondholders. In Mr. Woodsworth's opinion the government should do the same on behalf of the workmen.

Mr. Bennett Speaks

It was clear, said Conservative Leader Bennett, that the railway measure was attributable to the fact that the trustees did not resign when requested to do so. Also, from the evidence given some days ago to the railway committee, the minister had asked chairman Judge C. P. Fullerton to resign.

The chairman had said in his statement before that committee, the matter of his resigning his office had been discussed with Mr. Bennett when the latter was prime minister. But so far as the opposition leader's memory served him, Judge Fullerton had taken his superannuation as a judge when he left the bench, so that his services as a judge were terminated before he took the other office.

The matter of his reappointment to the bench was never discussed, continued Mr. Bennett.

"My personal view is that a superannuated judge is not eligible for appointment to the bench," the opposition leader said.

For National Service

Directorships of the railway will be put on a "basis of national service," Mr. Howe told a questioner. Salaries paid would not be large, possibly \$3,000 or \$4,000 a year. He thought the government could get able men by offering them an opportunity to perform a public service.

Mr. Howe told Robert Finn it was too soon to make a statement as to how the directors would be selected, and whether the principle of territorial representation would be recognized. Mr. Finn said the House had a right to know this as the interests of Nova Scotia might be affected.

Conservative Leader Bennett declared he had once entertained the thought of making all members of the Dominion and provincial parliaments act as shareholders, empowering them to cast a ballot for directors. He had abandoned it because those to whom

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he spoke did not receive it with much favor.

Why not the minister insert in the bill that the directors should hold office during the lifetime of the present Parliament, asked Mr. Bennett.

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