

harder to get the wheels of industry running. Whatever industrial conditions are in Canada—and to my mind they are not ideal—they are, nevertheless, the best in the world to-day. Compared with conditions in Europe, in Asia, in Australia, they are very good.

"We are all faced with the great problem of how we are going to get rid of inflated prices. I do not know how, but I do know that we cannot have real prosperity until we do get rid of that inflation. I was hoping for a gradual reduction—that we would not, so to speak, come to earth with a thud. I am beginning to fear that is not going to happen. I think I was one of the first manufacturers who stated that, after the armistice, there should be no attempt to reduce wages until the cost of living came down. I said that when, as a matter of fact, it would have been easy to lower wages with the inrush of men, but I felt that it could not be done unless the cost of living came down. But I have no patience with the idea that this is the time for increasing wages.

"Whether we are going to come out of this thing smoothly and get the industries running, I cannot say, but everything that is happening just now is certainly making it more difficult. One of the dangers is that of anticipating our trade. The only thing that is going to get us out of this trouble is more production and lowering of costs. If we are going to have a shortening of production at this critical time, shorter hours will, in my mind, perpetuate the unrest prevailing."

Mr. Findlay told how the present inflation of prices was curtailing consumption to a tremendous extent. People simply would not buy a single article more than they were compelled to. The Massey-Harris output, he estimated, was curtailed one-third by the present high cost of living. Asked by Commissioner Tom Moore if the cafeterias, the first-aid department and the pensions scheme adopted by the Massey-Harris had added materially to the cost of the articles produced, the witness said that so far it had not. When asked what he thought of the proposed 44-hour week, Mr. Findlay replied, "I think it is the most unwise proposal that could possibly be brought forward now. The working-men believe that curtailing working hours would increase the opportunities for employment. In my mind it would have a directly opposite effect, simply because it would be perpetuating high costs."

Mr. Findlay remarked that his own concern was producing now six months ahead of schedule, and was asked by Mr. Moore if it were not a fact that the warehouses were full of goods, if they could but be released. "I don't think the warehouses are full," replied the witness, "but my impression is that the people are holding off from buying."

#### Imperial Oil Industrial Plan

Mr. Findlay said that there was a surplus of labor in Toronto at the present time, but nothing abnormal. In reply to Commissioner Moore, he said he did not believe that the law of supply and demand should govern the wages paid workmen. "Every concern," he said, "should pay a living wage irrespective of the law of supply and demand." He said he hoped the Massey-Harris council of workmen would bring to the company's directors sane statistics as to what constituted a living wage.

The following statement was submitted by Dr. D. Strachan, assistant to the president of the Imperial Oil Company, Limited: "A few days ago in Sarnia the Commission heard the evidence of a witness who testified that the Industrial Representation plan of the Imperial Oil, Ltd., has been a failure; that the workers in the company's refineries are dissatisfied with it; that it was being used as a weapon to combat trade unionism; and that it could not bridge over the chasm which existed between the workers and the company at that moment.

"It is only fair to these workers to state that this evidence was as unauthorized by them as it was unjustified by the facts. The witnesses, who in the press reports were made to appear as employees of the company, speaking with authority and upon behalf of their fellow-workmen, were outsiders, intent upon discrediting the Industrial Representation plan, and to undermine its influence in maintain-

ing harmony and mutually satisfactory relations within this enterprise.

"It is significant that the only criticism which the plan has received has come from this one outside source, and that following it a report was sent out from Sarnia that a strike was imminent at the refinery there. So far from this containing any more truth than did the criticism of the plan only a few days ago, at a meeting of the regularly-elected representatives of all the Sarnia Refinery employees, at which, after one of our periodic and scientific inquiries into the trend of the cost of living had taken place, a new wage scale was unanimously adopted by the representatives and ratified by the company. A further resolution was moved by Delegate Hampton, representing the Acid Works, and Delegate Bazeley, representing the Car Repairers, expressing to the officials of the company appreciation of the liberal scale of wages which became effective May 1st, and assuring the officials that the new wage scale would be entirely satisfactory and highly appreciated by employees in the plant. This resolution, upon being put to a vote, was carried unanimously.

"I mention this for the reason that practically every reader of newspapers in Canada is now laboring under a complete misapprehension as to the outcome of an earnest and sincere effort to bring about such harmony and co-operation in Canadian industry as would endure, because it was based upon justice. The inauguration of the plan was not an expedient to combat any labor menace, because in the twenty-one years of its existence there has never been a strike at the Sarnia Refinery. Rather, it was the outcome of a long and intimate association between all classes of workers in the company's service, and the conviction, which was deepened by the war, of the necessity of mutual consideration and unity in industry. As I have said, a deliberate effort has been made to prejudice the Industrial Representation plan in the eyes of employees and employers alike, and I am impelled to make this public statement, because I feel that this is no time to permit the attitude of those concerned in industrial operations in this country, who are at peace with each other, to be misrepresented. In absolutely refuting the statement that the Industrial Representation plan had been in any degree a failure I make no claims for it, except that it affords a point of direct contact between every interest in our industry. It provides for the discussion of questions relating to wages, hours, working and living conditions at conferences, the constitution of which provides an equal representation of the employees and the executive. I believe in the plan because I feel that any medium which forces men of varying opinions to sit down, face to face, week after week, in an open, untrammelled exchange of views, must result in a fairly even balance of the rights of each being ultimately established."

The employment of skilled labor is better now in Toronto than that of unskilled labor, according to Mr. T. A. Russell, of the Russell Motor Car Company. The strike called by the metal trades workers in Toronto was not brought about by the workers themselves, but by outside influence, declared Mr. Russell. The men had no grievances with their employers warranting a strike, he maintained. Only in cases of unemployment, sickness or old age, over any of which factors the men had no control, did men have grievances which should be adjusted. Asked by Commissioner Moore about the minimum working hours in the metal trades, Mr. Russell declared that he believed it a mistake to limit the working week below 48 hours. The acute period of unemployment and unrest to-day is a reproduction of conditions of 1914 and 1915, and was an outgrowth of the war. The lack of sympathy shown by employers toward labor organizations was attributed by the witness to be the opposition of the unions to payment on piece work and not allowing their members to work on more than one machine.

The war profiteer in Canada, by his bleeding of the public, was largely responsible for the present industrial unrest, according to Mr. John Doggett, secretary of the Toronto Industrial Council. The regulation of prices on stable articles of food should be undertaken by the Dominion government, he stated. The need of a system of co-opera-