

Ford Motor Plant Strike

of employment with the company that a person must be, become, or remain a member in good standing of the union. . . . In our view, once the question of union security is settled, the parties should have no difficulty in solving the remaining issues, but it is our opinion that neither party is likely to make any concessions on the remaining issues until the question of union security is settled.

At the conference we found that the board of conciliation correctly expressed the situation. The representatives of the union were very definite in their statement that the main requirements necessary to effect a settlement were, (a) provision for a union shop whereby every employee would be required after employment to join the union and remain a member thereof as a condition of employment (b) a check-off provision whereby union dues would be deducted from the pay cheque of employees and paid to the union, and (c) a satisfactory decision on other questions of importance to the union.

The representatives of the company were just as definite in their attitude, which may be summed up as (a) they were not prepared to enter into negotiations for a new collective agreement until access to their plant was given to their officials and to office workers, and until employees necessary for the proper maintenance of the power plant were returned to work. May I say to the hon. member for Calgary West (Mr. Smith), who has had some experience in the mining industry, that while the strike of the power plant employees is perfectly legal, it has always been a policy followed by unions in the mining industry that the maintenance men are never taken out "on the street", because when a strike is over you have to go back to work, and if the mine is full of water of course, you do not go back to work. As I intimated yesterday to both parties, if we get a cold spell in the near future there will not be any necessity for conciliation, because the power plant will be down for months and of course nobody will be able to work under those conditions. To me that seems elementary.

As I was saying, the attitude of the company's representatives was definitely that they first demanded access to their plant for officials and office workers, and (b) they would not in any event grant a union shop or check-off or any variation of such union security provisions.

We did succeed in bringing about a meeting between Messrs. Burt and England for the union and Messrs. Campbell and Clark for the company. We told them that they had in their own hands the power to settle their differences and we urged upon them the im-

[Mr. Mitchell.]

portance of their doing so in the interests of all concerned, including the citizens of Windsor and the people of Canada generally.

These representatives later reported to us that they had a very frank discussion but could not come to an agreement.

It was made very evident during our discussions that the most difficult problem to overcome was the divergent views of both parties on the questions of union shop and check-off. At the final sitting of the conference I recommended to the parties that on this question a compromise be accepted along the lines of that which had been found satisfactory in a number of the other industrial plants in Ontario, where the same union has contracts at the present time, namely a provision to check-off union dues revocable by the employees at any time. My recommendation, of course, was not favourably received by either side and was not acceptable to either party.

In an effort to prevent negotiations from breaking down I urged both parties to give further consideration to the recommendation, and in that connection to consult their associates. I stated that I should be glad to meet them, at their convenience, in a few days in Ottawa to further canvass the possibilities of a settlement.

It is with great regret that I make this unsatisfactory report to the house. Here we have a situation where both sides are determined to maintain their respective positions. Willingness to give and take must be shown by both parties if a settlement is to be made. There must be a change of attitude on both sides. Confidence in labour relations is a plant of slow growth and cannot be achieved except on a basis of mutually satisfactory relationships. Legislation or coercion is not a substitute for that age-old principle in labour negotiations.

I am still hopeful that the parties will give serious thought to the suggestions and recommendations made to them at the conference and will meet again very soon.

In conclusion I should like to express my appreciation of the excellent assistance and co-operation which I was given by the Hon. Mr. Blackwell, acting minister of labour for the Ontario government, and his officials. We acted in unison on the matter and Mr. Blackwell and his officials sat with me during the whole of the negotiations.

Mr. HOMUTH: May I ask the minister one question? He stated that apparently there were two elements in the quarrel between the union and the company. Was not the question of annual wages one of the paramount issues? I was given to understand that that is so.