

*Pacific Coast Longshoremen Dispute*

question whether such men can serve two masters, the union and management. It seems to me that the question the minister put to the house is academic. The men are not asking to join the union of the men they are supervising. They are asking to have a bargaining agency, and that agency can be completely different from the workmen's union. Or it could be a local of the same union to which the workmen belonged, or it could be an entirely different agency. The foremen do not insist that their organization be part of the longshoremen's union; but since there is no other way at the present time to implement their wishes they are willing to be a local attached to the International Longshoremen's Association.

The foremen have certain supervisory powers. I do not think the minister is right when he says they have the power to hire and fire. They have limited powers, and mainly their job is to supervise the work of the crews coming under their care.

The request of the foremen, the straw bosses as they are called in the industry, to be allowed to organize to bargain collectively is not unusual. In the union to which I belonged in my youth, the International Typographical Union, the foremen belonged to the same union to which the men belonged. That sort of thing is not satisfactory to some employers but I understand that in the United States, supervisory personnel coming under their labour relations act are allowed to form their own agencies to bargain collectively. The foremen there do not join the union of the men they are supervising. The foremen have their own agencies and their own organization for the purpose of collective bargaining.

What the foremen here are asking is what has happened in other industries. Here, since the men have a union to bargain for them, as their conditions improve, the level of conditions for the men keeps getting closer to that of the foremen. The foremen have no one to bargain for them, because they are dependent entirely on the generosity and gratuity of the employer. They have no spokesmen; they have no leader, and they ought to have some organization.

I do not agree with the decision of the Labour Relations Board. If, however, the board is correct in the judgment it renders, then certainly I think an amendment to the act is called for to make it clear that supervisory personnel, up to a certain level, should be allowed to form their own agencies to bargain collectively.

The minister said that though the employers did not agree to bargain with these men, and they could have done so, the decision of the Labour Relations Board did not preclude such bargaining. The decision said only that the employers did not have to bargain. But the employers could have bargained with the foremen of Local 514, and the matter could have been settled. Instead, the employers refused to do that, and the foremen went on strike. It was at that time that the minister should have stepped in and appointed a mediator.

The foremen were not asking for wages or for set conditions of labour. They were only asking for a certain type of collective bargaining. They said they were prepared to continue work if the employers would agree to negotiate with them. That was all they asked. It seems to me that at that time a mediator could have persuaded the foremen to keep on working if the mediator had promised that he would do everything in his power to persuade the employers to sit down and bargain with the foremen.

Since nothing was done by the Department of Labour, since no concession was made by the employers, the men went on strike. The matter was taken to the courts. They were ordered to stop picketing, which they did, and when they removed their picket lines the longshoremen went back to work. The foremen obeyed the law, and the longshoremen who had refused to cross the picket line went back to work. Then followed a chapter which the minister never fully explained. The stevedoring companies contended that there was a deliberate slowdown of work by the longshoremen. The men, on the other hand, contended that there was complete chaos on the waterfront because without the foremen to organize the work there was no proper supervision, and this led to hazardous working conditions.

● (12:20 p.m.)

I am not in a position to say whether the employers are right and there was a deliberate slowdown, or whether the men are right in saying that the slowdown was due to poor supervision and hazardous working conditions. Maybe the truth is somewhere in between. I do not know; but the minister should know. He could have appointed someone and sent him out there to gather the facts and place them before him, and if necessary before parliament.

This, we do know: whether or not the employers told the men not to come back, they