

Labour Relations

say how pleased I was to hear so many speakers in this House today attempt to redress what I think is a media myth that is becoming prevalent in this country, namely, that of laying all of our ills in terms of inflation at labour's door.

Another portion of the motion that bothers me is the following:

—the toleration of a system which allows certain union figures to wield powers exceeding their responsibilities.

I am not sure what that means. However, if it suggests there is a large number of union leaders who are wielding powers exceeding their responsibilities, the facts belie it. In fact most of the settlements that have been rejected were rejected by the membership. It is the membership that is unsatisfied with its share of the national income and the national economy. We must be sensitive to the problems of the rank and file of the trade union movement who very often reject the recommendations of their own executive.

We must remember that those who go on strike never make the decision lightly. They may get \$20 a week in strike pay. I heard someone saying the amount they have to pay for food is not as significant as it used to be. If you are on a union scale receiving \$20 a week, have house payments to meet and children to feed, it is a very serious decision you have to make to go on strike. It is never done lightly.

When workers go on strike as much as they have in the past year, we should take a careful look at our society. The phrase "industrial democracy" is thrown around from time to time. It seems to be a pretty useful phrase, one which we should consider in a very serious way. I am pleased to see the Postmaster General (Mr. Mackasey) in the House because I wish to quote something he said on May 14 to the Canadian Direct Mail Association, as follows:

● (2130)

Production, production—that's management's real concern. We see employee behaviour as something that hurts or helps production. The employees know this, they know that management's real concern is the system—all this industrial democracy jazz is a ploy to goose up production. They are not stupid, they know when concern is phoney.

Our attitude goes back to the robber barons. They believed absolutely in their right to limitless power. As John D. Rockefeller said, "God gave me my money".

The rationalization is bankrupt today but our goal has merely broadened. Instead of personal wealth, it's national wealth. We genuflect to the growth of the GNP. Our basic relationship isn't to man, it is to things. And so we don't design machines for man's needs, just for efficiency. We don't organize work with man in mind, just the product. We treat labour more humanely than we did in 1867 when Karl Marx outlined what he called "the irreconcilable opposition of capital and labour", but our attitude hasn't really changed, labour is still a commodity. The system doesn't exist for man, man exists to serve the system.

That is a most penetrating critique of the kind of society we live in today. I live in hope that the Postmaster General in the discharge of his responsibility will attempt to apply some of that philosophy to those who work in the postal service.

The discussion concerning industrial democracy is one which I hope will find its place at the bargaining table and lead to meaningful, practical clauses in the collective

[Mr. Leggatt.]

agreements under which workers will be asked on a regular basis to engage actively in the management and provision of whatever service is concerned—and in the Post Office it is the delivery of mail and associated services. The sickness that exists in the Post Office is not only the result of a lack of involvement in managerial decisions; it comes from the dehumanizing nature of the job itself.

My father worked in the Post Office in New Westminster for 36 years. He was proud of the fact that he worked for the Post Office. He had memorized almost all the routes. There was some challenge attached to the work, and doing a good job gave him satisfaction. But there is a difference now.

Workers are too often asked to do things which are so routine, so dull, so soul-destroying that they attack the machine which they sense is destroying them as persons. This thought has been well expressed by the Postmaster General and I commend him for his very human approach to the problem. It is one which is developing not only in the postal service but in industry throughout the western world. It is a new world, a new system and I believe that until we recognize the frustration generated by this system we shall not be able to solve the problems which arise. Throwing blame around makes no contribution to industrial peace.

If we examine the societies which have experienced least industrial unrest over the years we find that where the feeling of the common good, the social contract, if you like, is most accepted, there has been least social disruption. We can get to that point if we carry out significant experiments in industrial democracy, through profit sharing, through moving away from the old idea that bargaining is strictly a poker game. I believe there is need for full disclosure. I am tired of the two sides in a labour dispute playing games with each other. It should be required that the management side fully reveal its cost and profit picture, and similarly it should be incumbent upon the representatives of labour to make full disclosure.

Labour intransigence is not always the problem. Remember the grain handlers strike last fall. It was the companies, not the union, which refused to accept the conciliation report of Dr. Perry. To give another example, the asbestos workers are presently on strike at Thetford. What are they striking for? They are striking for the right to monitor dust levels so that they do not die as a result of the effects of asbestos on the lungs. Mr. Speaker, I wonder how long it would take this House to pass legislation to control asbestos pollution if we faced high asbestos levels as we talked in here every day, and people told us that one out of every five of us would die from cancer of the lungs.

The question of time lost because of strikes has been dealt with by many speakers today. It does not amount to as much as time lost through lay-offs, or time lost through illness. But when it comes to developing a consensus we still have to ask ourselves serious questions about the kind of society in which we live. Alienation in the work world is developing in line with a society which tells us that if we compete with each other to the utmost of our ability we shall lead a successful life. This philosophy also leads to urban crime, drug abuse, and the waste of our resources. It is a system which assumes that competition is the basic instinct of man and is in itself a desirable thing.