

nothing they cannot do and will not do if they will only see the other fellow's point of view. Of that I am convinced.

The hon. member for Calgary West, or perhaps it was Mr. Brockington, said in the committee the other day that ten years from now Stelco will wish that they had had good relations with the steel workers' organization ten years previously. But these things cannot be achieved overnight. There must be a willingness to cooperate, to see the other point of view, and to establish just conditions within the industry.

I assure my hon. friend that anything I can do I will do to bring about an end of the dispute in this particular industry as well as in any others in which difficulties arise.

Mr. GILLIS: There are just a few words I wish to say. I do not intend to go into the merits or demerits of any of the disputes which are in progress at the present time. The hon. member for Vancouver East has said, I think, all that it is necessary to say on that subject. But there is one aspect of that dispute on which I want to refresh the minister's memory and suggest that he might get it out of the way, as one of the sore spots at the present time. I refer to that differential of five cents in the Sydney plant. I do not look upon that particular question as a matter which comes within the scope of the present dispute, because that question has been before the national war labour board for the past three years, and it should have been settled a long time ago. To the best of my knowledge it is still before the national war labour board, and I think a decision on it is being held up because of the general dispute in steel. The board should handle that differential and render a decision on it as quickly as possible, apart from the general settlement in the steel strike.

The opinion has gone abroad that it is the policy of the government to maintain wage differentials as from province to province. As I pointed out in committee to the minister, a decision made within the past month by the national board practically confirms that. That was the decision in the Amherst case. I am not going into it, but I seriously suggest to the minister that he get in touch with the national war labour board in order to bring about a decision in that Sydney angle of the differential.

The minister's department tabled cost of living statistics with the industrial relations committee as between Sault Ste. Marie, Hamilton and Sydney, and the figures show that the cost of living in the city of Sydney for basic products is twenty per cent higher than

[Mr. Mitchell.]

it is either in Sault Ste. Marie or in Hamilton. Despite that, there is a differential of five cents an hour in wages as between Sault Ste. Marie, Hamilton and Sydney. The differential should be the other way if you are trying to even up the incomes of the steel workers.

That is all I am going to say on that. But I would earnestly suggest to the minister that he do something about that differential apart from the general settlement in steel, because it does not belong to the general question. It has been before the board for three years, and a decision should be made.

The matter of the steel workers' strike and all the other disputes is, the minister said, a matter between the state, the union and the companies. We have done all we can in this house; if talking would have cured the situation it would have been over long ago. All we can do at this stage of the game is to leave it to the good judgment of the people concerned to bring about a settlement in the best interests of all concerned.

On the minister's estimates from item to item there are a few questions I wish to ask him.

Mr. KNOWLES: Before this item carries, I should like to say a few words about a matter which I have raised in this house a number of times. I refer to the claim of certain employees of the Canadian Pacific Railway Company and other Canadian Pacific companies for pension rights denied them because of participation in certain strikes back in 1918 and 1919. It is unnecessary for me to give the whole story behind this issue because I have already placed it on the record of this house on a number of occasions. The first time I raised it was on May 1, 1944, and I continued to bring the matter to the attention of the government in the hope that something might be done. At long last, on April 12, 1945, the Prime Minister gave me the assurance, in answer to a question on the orders of the day, that consideration would be given to a request made by certain unions, representing some of the men involved, for the setting up of a royal commission to go into this whole question. Shortly after the Prime Minister gave me that assurance in the house, I got in touch with him by letter, pressing for the immediate implementing of his promise, and a few days later received from him a letter under date of April 17 in which he again assured me that the request would be—and I quote—"carefully considered with a view to determining whether or not the appointment of a royal commission would in fact contribute to the solution of the problem". Following that promise made by the Prime