

*Pacific Coast Longshoremen Dispute*

think that not only should a comprehensive labour code be set up but I would also suggest that management all across Canada should form some sort of organization which would seek to establish a code for employers in anticipation of problems which might arise in the future. This action would eliminate the need for working men in Canada to strike in order to get a living wage.

• (1:00 p.m.)

I will now take the side of labour and ask: "What is labour doing?" I do not think the average working man in Canada wants to strike. He certainly does not want to strike for nothing, but he feels that this is his only weapon. In a great many cases the worker strikes because he is forced to do so by his union and sometimes the unions are controlled on the other side of the border. I would say that parliament is the last court of appeal to which labour and management can come. It is up to us to give them leadership in solving these problems. I do not think it is the sole responsibility of the Minister of Labour or of the government to put an end to strikes, but it appears that parliament is fed up with costly strikes and is fed up with piecemeal solutions to our problems.

We should get down to the fundamentals and set up a proper labour code, the keystone of which should be the right to vote by secret ballot in the election of union officers. The labour force has no real power over the unions. The worker becomes a double slave; he becomes a slave of management and a slave of the goons in the labour movement. I suggest that most of the abuse in the labour movement comes from unions controlled outside of Canada and therefore I think that the secret ballot would enable the workers in Canada to pick the union officers of their choice. Without a secret ballot an election can be absolutely meaningless.

I think there is a danger in the closed shop practice. In the present strike on the west coast, the foremen do not know whether they belong to labour or management or whether they should belong to a union. If they had the right to resort to the use of a secret ballot perhaps they would not have to join a union at all if they felt they did not feel at home in it.

The second matter which I think should be contained in the labour code is a provision ensuring Canadian control of our unions. I mentioned that some of the abused were created by forces outside Canada, and I would

suggest that Canadians would not be controlled by these forces if our unions were independent. As regards the strikes, it seems to me that a great many workers in Canada feel they are fairly well paid and are willing to carry on their work, temporarily at least, if they had the power to decide, again by secret ballot, whether or not they want to strike.

I think that we should include in the federal labour code a provision stating that the federal government will not do business—and they are the big employer—with any person who has been convicted during the last five years of certain crimes against the person and the state.

With reference to the present crisis, I think that if a labour court had been set up in Canada long ago we would have avoided many of the strikes which have taken place. We should appoint to such a court members from the labour field and from management, and arbitrators as impartial as we can get them. This should be a permanent court which, when it is not occupied with settling strikes, should devote considerable time to research in the field of labour-management relations. The law should provide that strikes could not legally take place until due notice had been given to the labour court to enable it to come up with an equitable solution. In this way many strikes would be averted. The points of the labour code which I have enumerated would ensure that the best interests of labour and of the whole country would be protected.

As regards the immediate crisis with which we are faced, parliament has given a blank cheque to the Minister of Labour to take immediate steps to protect the economy of Canada and put these people back to work, while offering them an opportunity to reach a settlement. However, unless something is done along the lines I suggested with reference to the Canadian law, and workers are guaranteed the right to pick their own leaders, I do not think we will solve the predicament in which we find ourselves. I would hate to see the year 1967, the year of our centennial, taken up with an increasing list of strikes. Our birthday party will give these disgruntled labour people a wonderful opportunity to put us in an embarrassing situation, and the criminal elements in our labour force—and there are such elements—will take advantage of this. If we plan now, we will be able to take action which will give the people of Canada the right to work under proper conditions.

[Mr. Bigg.]