

the form of a heavy fine. But another order in council, P.C. 2685, setting out the proper relations between employer and employee is a dead letter because it has no teeth in it, and the government has given the Minister of Labour (Mr. McLarty) no power to enforce it.

In Britain the success of the war effort in the last six months is due to the fact that labour is organized and its power made manifest in the highest councils of the nation. In Canada employers thwart with impunity attempts to organize. Even plants financed by the government deliberately discriminate against men who wish to organize. Indeed, a government corporation, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, which for some inexplicable reason the Minister of Munitions and Supply took with him when he left the rest of his former department behind, forbade organization among its employees.

True, the Prime Minister repudiated Major Murray's attempt to speak in the name of the government on that occasion, but apparently nothing further was done about the matter by the minister. What is his attitude toward the unionization of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation employees, or that of workers in government-financed plants? And what of the broadcasting corporation? Radio is an important feature of modern life. Through it great good or evil can be done. In a free democratic country it ought to be available to all. But in Canada, people on this side of the house are never invited to participate in the discussion of public issues. That is reserved for members of the government and for officials who praise them. Indeed, radio stations in some parts refuse to allow representatives of organized labour to use their facilities, even though their manuscripts may have been passed by the dominion censor. Yet employing interests are able to use the same facilities to pat themselves on their backs or to smother the country with soap. Nevertheless it was through the efforts of public-spirited citizens that radio in Canada was made a public service subject to the control of parliament.

Now that radio is an important weapon of war it is deplorable that this great service has been allowed by the responsible minister to deteriorate to the extent that a gentleman, whom the *Winnipeg Free Press* describes as being "one of the oldest and staunchest supporters of publicly owned radio in Canada" has resigned.

Mr. Alan Plaunt's charges are very serious. In his letter of resignation he states that he has long ceased to have confidence in the

[Mr. Coldwell.]

internal organization and executive direction of the corporation. He adds, and again I quote:

It is my considered view that the present conditions seriously hamper the corporation in fulfilling its functions in the war emergency, and prejudice its survival as an effective instrument of national unity afterwards.

These, I repeat, are serious charges and demand careful investigation by this parliament. This is not the time to enter into details, but a few things occur to one who has listened to the radio during the past year. In time of war the news and propaganda which come over the air are of the utmost importance. This is particularly true in the case of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, because its broadcasts are heard by our neighbours to the south. In war time it is essential that our educational programmes should be attractive, pleasant to the ear as well as appealing to the intelligence of the radio audience. Its day-time sustaining programmes, consisting largely of soap advertising, are turned off in thousands of homes across Canada. People are tired of hearing about suds, dirty clothes and the airing of imaginary family squabbles and difficulties.

But I have been wondering if the situation in the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation may not be due to inadequate ministerial supervision. I have tried to imagine why the Minister of Munitions and Supply retained radio under his control when he abandoned the transport portfolio. It is impossible to see any connection between radio and the production of munitions and supplies; surely its proper place is with those in charge of information and propaganda. Why did the minister of one of the heaviest and most important war departments retain an additional department which has no relation to his work? This should be explained.

Finally—and this must be said by someone—there are the most disquieting stories in circulation regarding the competence and so on, of the general manager. A reputable journal like *Toronto Saturday Night* no doubt refers to this in its last issue when it says:

And after poking around it seems that there is a mess in the management and policy of the C.B.C., that a public airing will probably do good.

If this is true, then the sooner parliament looks into the matter the better. This country cannot afford the luxury of incompetence or unreliability in the management of one of our most important war and post-war instruments. In short, I believe, that this parliament has the right to know what serious weaknesses the investigation by Mr. Thompson, to which Mr. Plaunt refers in his