

Proposed Committee on Unemployment

It is an idea which I suggest to the government. It is one which I commend to the government. I am perfectly certain that they will not act upon any idea which comes from this side, but I think it is one thing which would help to restore what the Acting Prime Minister called an economic atmosphere conducive to a high level of employment. The minister speaks about it, but I have yet to see the government doing anything about it.

Mr. B. R. Leboe (Cariboo): Mr. Speaker, as one who spent 20 years working in industry, and who for some 15 years has had men working for me, I intend tonight to touch on a different phase of the unemployment situation. I should like to follow along the lines adopted tonight by the hon. member for Edmonton East (Mr. Holowach). What I would like to say tonight has to do with management-labour relations.

I am not concerned at the moment with the figures in respect to unemployment. These statistics mean very little to us unless we are thoroughly familiar with all the matters connected with them. What I am concerned with today is the relationship that exists between management and labour. I do not believe either management or labour are justified in all the things they do. The employer is as dependent upon labour as labour is dependent on the employer. And, as the hon. member for Edmonton East said, we must perpetuate that marriage, and we must encourage the attitude of partnership.

In connection with the unemployment situation today, and in past years, I believe it will be found that much of it has resulted because of the wedge which has been driven between management and labour. That is one of the greatest causes for alarm in any country; and the lack of proper relationship between those who are to perform the work and those who are outlining the work to be performed must always constitute a serious problem to any country.

In that regard I would like to touch upon the problem of strikes, and in this matter I can speak with some knowledge, for we just went through a 101-day strike in the Prince George area. During that strike we found children going to school without butter or jam or anything else between their slices of bread, and other children at the schools had to share with the children of those who were unfortunate enough to be caught in that strike.

A strike does not only affect the strikers, but also other people who are connected with the particular industry involved, and who

perhaps themselves were not in favour of the strike. That was the case at Prince George. Prior to the strike we had three trains per day hauling lumber out of that town, but after the strike had been on for some little time these trains were entirely cut off. The railroad men depending on the lumber industry suffered because of the relationship that existed between management and labour at Prince George.

In any investigation the government might conduct into this matter I hope that is one of the phases of our industrial life which will be investigated at the same time, because harmonious relationships between management and labour will aid in any development of our natural resources and in the construction of irrigation and power projects so badly needed in this country.

There is one particular aspect we should all remember, and that is that any worker who works in a plant, regardless of its size and monetary value, is making a living out of the fixed assets that are there. The operator naturally expects to operate at a profit; but we must not forget, as workers, that we have all this equipment in our hands with which to make our living. I recall that when I was employed in the sawmill industry I would often look at the machines there and reflect that I had nothing to do with the actual investment, but that I certainly had a chance to produce and make a living with the machines which were provided.

Management is dependent on labour and labour is dependent on management. If they cannot get along together we cannot solve our production problems. Once we develop harmonious relations between management and labour, and I say this sincerely, I do not think we need to fear communism in this country. Those people who would sow distrust and hatred and drive a wedge between management and labour are the ones who are going to be our undoing in the long run if this situation is allowed to continue. We must make every effort to bring management and labour closer together.

On motion of Mr. Leboe the debate was adjourned.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Harris: Mr. Speaker, tomorrow we shall continue this debate, and if it is concluded we shall take up the amendments to the Salaries Act; amendments to the Members of Parliament Retiring Allowances Act; and the resolution with respect to the Export Credits Insurance Act.

At ten o'clock the house adjourned, without question put, pursuant to standing order.