

Mr. WOODSWORTH: Of course they did. That is the wretched implication that is constantly thrown out. The leader of the opposition went into a rolling series of sentences with regard to the effort to establish a soviet form of government in Winnipeg, and all this kind of thing. Yet he also stated in another connection that these men were sitting in conference discussing their grievances. Do you suppose that men who were trying to overturn the government of Canada would be sitting listening to the higher officials of the Post Office Department? Why, it is absurd. At the very time the newspapers were sending telegrams out regarding the terrible conditions in Winnipeg, Mr. A. B. Hudson, at one time a member of this house, and several gentlemen were trying to find some sort of formula which would settle the trouble with the machinists, which formed the basis of the strike, and thus settle the whole matter.

A good many of the men who were associated with the strikers were returned soldiers. Thousands of returned men just back from the front, who had been labour people before they went abroad and who had found it difficult to secure work, and learned that many of the things for which they had fought were not being worked out here in Canada, associated themselves with the workers. Do you mean to tell me that these thousands of returned men were going to attempt to overturn the government of Canada? The whole thing is preposterous.

Mr. ADSHEAD: For which they had been fighting.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: For which they had been fighting. I say the idea is preposterous, and yet these stories were spread across the country. It is quite true that the Hon. G. D. Robertson came to Winnipeg and tried to settle the strike. The trouble is he went at it the wrong way. Had he not come I have not the slightest doubt the city of Winnipeg and the province of Manitoba would have settled it in a much more satisfactory way than it ultimately was settled. But he came in his own peculiar fashion and stirred things up still more, and then he refused to receive a deputation of returned men who waited upon him; he would not let them march to the Royal Alexandra. It was that which caused the trouble that brought about the unfortunate incident in which there was shooting in the streets of Winnipeg.

Mr. MANION: Did my hon. friend say that Mr. Meighen refused to receive a deputation of returned men?

[Mr. Adshead.]

Mr. WOODSWORTH: It was Mr. Robertson; I did not say Mr. Meighen.

Mr. MANION: Was he informed that it was merely a deputation of returned men?

Mr. WOODSWORTH: He was informed that a procession of returned men wished to wait upon him at the Royal Alexandra, and he refused to see them. He did receive a small committee of these men, and this is what occurred so far as I am able to learn, and I was there and watching it very closely. The returned men said they were going to have a parade whether the Minister of Labour wanted it or not. They had been used to parading in France and they said they intended to have one in Canada. The labour men tried to dissuade them because they recognized the danger of such a parade on the streets at the time of public excitement. However, the returned men said they were going on with it. As a matter of fact, the parade did not even form up, but a great many people came out to see the show. It was a most regrettable occurrence; you would have thought a great circus was coming to town, and the streets were lined in every direction by curious crowds. When the time came for the parade the mayor read the riot act, and then the police came on the scene. There had been specials there who had antagonized the people by the way they had handled the crowds. There were some missiles thrown, and then there was the charge and the shooting. That is what occurred.

As I said in this house on one other occasion, if this was to be a physical revolution for the overturn of the government of this country, can you imagine for a moment that the workers would not have armed themselves? In all the investigations that were held there was not found one single gun in the hands of the workers. The idea of a physical revolution being brought about by the strikers in Winnipeg was absolutely preposterous.

I do not think I could do better, to illustrate the kind of hysteria which prevailed, even among our legal friends and the government officials at that time, than by reading a few words from some things I wrote in those days, and for which I was arrested.

An hon. MEMBER: How did they find you?

Mr. WOODSWORTH: They found me when I undertook to edit a paper in the place of a friend of mine who was arrested. I knew pretty nearly what was likely to happen and it did happen. I was arrested, but generally