

1916
W.L. Mackenzie King
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GOVERNMENT DECISION ON WAGES. NEW ADVANCES SHOULD BE STRICTLY LIMITED.

An important decision has been reached by the Government with regard to applications for advances in wages by men in certain trades. It is understood to be an outcome of Ministerial and Departmental consideration of measures of national economy.

The statement, which has been communicated by the Government Committee on Production to several trade unions immediately affected, is in the following terms:—

His Majesty's Government have given earnest attention to the financial position of the country, to the great and increasing demands which will still be made upon its resources to meet the needs of the war, and to the imperative need for economy in all forms of expenditure and consumption, both public and private.

They have also had regard to the general advances of wages that have already been given since the beginning of the war, and to the measures already taken to tax or limit the profits of undertakings.

His Majesty's Government have come to the conclusion that, in view of the pressing emergency, any further advances of wages (other than advances following automatically from existing agreements) should be strictly confined to the adjustment of local conditions where such adjustments are proved to be necessary.

It is understood (says the Press Association) that the Government decision is being rigidly applied, and unless local conditions are such as to necessitate adjustment, applications for wages advances are being generally refused.

The Committee on Production (in Engineering and Shipbuilding Establishments) was formed nearly a year ago to consider, among other matters, bad time-keeping, working conditions and increase of output of munitions and other work.

Only recently, in addressing trade union delegates on the need of economy, Mr. Asquith and Mr. McKenna gave a hint that demands for increase of wages should be limited, with a view to national economy. This was regarded as a reasonable expectation in view of the taxation of employers' excess war profits.

WAGES INCREASE REFUSED.

The application of the Joint Shipyard Trades for a wages advance of 15 per cent. throughout the country has been refused by the Board of Trade arbitrators in conformity with the Government pronouncement that additional wages increases are not for the good of the nation at the present time.

The application was put forward on behalf of 150,000 shipyard workers.

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