

Collective Bargaining Under Fire

The Canadian system of industrial relations is in need of a major overhaul. What should be done? In this and subsequent issues we will present three viewpoints providing insights into the complexity of the problem. The first—*Strikes: Today's Monstrosity, Tomorrow's Dinosaur?*—is from industrialist R. P. Riggin, who thinks that the system is overbalanced in favour of labour and that, if changes are not made, a new system, might evolve that would include compulsory arbitration. The second—*The Strike:*

Reluctant Instrument in a Free Market Economy—will be from university professor Bernard Brody, who argues against Mr. Riggin's ideas and believes that the strike is a weapon reluctantly used in our economy. The third—*Room for Improvement*—will be from federal Labour Minister Bryce Mackasey who, although he believes that the system is basically sound, outlines the many changes that he thinks must be made to restore the system to good health.

Strikes : today's monstrosity tomorrow's dinosaur

R. P. Riggin

Most thoughtful people would agree that a strike is not a very civilized way to settle a dispute between an employer and his employees. As the alacrity, frequency and severity with which the strike weapon is used grows—and it is growing—this belief is bolstered substantially.

A recent "Wizard of Id" comic strip goes like this: Court Counsellor (approaching King on throne): "Sire, some agitators just burned down the post office." King: "Anyone hurt?" Counsellor: "No, the mailmen are all at home having a sick-in." King: "Then send in the troops!" Counsellor: "The troops are picking up garbage until the sanitation workers return." King: "Gad! The whole kingdom is going down the drain!" Counsellor: "I hope not, Sire—the plumbers walked out this morning."

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