

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: May I interrupt my honourable friend to ask if the arbitration in the clothing industry is not voluntary rather than compulsory?

Hon. Mr. McKeen: It is compulsory in the sense that if management and labour cannot come to an agreement the arbitrator makes a decision that is binding upon both. I may be wrong, but that is my idea of compulsory arbitration.

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: The workers voluntarily entered into that agreement?

Hon. Mr. McKeen: That is right.

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: Then it is voluntary arbitration.

Hon. Mr. McKeen: But the workers decided that this was a better way to settle disputes than by strikes, and they insisted upon such a provision in their contract. In other words, this union has voluntarily given up the right to strike by—

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: Will the honourable gentleman please pardon me for interrupting his continuity of thought? I know something about this agreement. Is this not the fact: that the agreement to appoint an arbitrator relates to the interpretation of the terms of the contract?

Hon. Mr. McKeen: My understanding is that the agreement goes beyond that, and provides that during the term of the contract all disputes will be referred to the arbitrator, and that when a new contract is made the same terms will apply.

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: I doubt that.

Hon. Mr. McKeen: That is the information which I have regarding two specific unions. The International Ladies Garment Workers Union, for instance, has not called a strike for many years, and I think that such an agreement as it has should be adopted by other unions.

I agree with the suggestion of my honourable colleague from Vancouver South (Hon. Mr. Farris), that the government would be well advised to set up a labour court to which questions affecting labour and management could be referred. In that way we would avoid serious work stoppages such as we have had within the past month.

As to whether management or labour was to blame for the breakdown in the recent strike negotiations just depends, I think, on the point of view. A great deal of criticism has been directed at Donald Gordon for his actions in the negotiations with the railway workers. My friend from Vancouver South has given us the facts surrounding the breakdown of the negotiations, but I would point

out that Donald Gordon who was appointed by the government to operate the railway, was also an employee and had no financial interest in the enterprise. His only interest was to try to secure for the workers satisfactory working conditions, to give the people of Canada a fair deal, and to see to it that the railway continued to operate successfully.

In my opinion Donald Gordon was used by the unions as a whipping boy because the negotiations broke down. Perhaps I am wrong, but if a negotiator told me that he had no further proposals and there was no change, I would think that was tantamount to saying that the negotiations were concluded. Certainly, Donald Gordon had no way of knowing that a statement once made was going to be changed later. In my opinion, it is most unfair that a man who has done a great deal for his country should be subjected to abuse from those who were opposed to him. Donald Gordon has taken on the onerous task of running a railway enterprise for the Canadian people, and he has done, and is now doing, a great service for Canada. As to the general question of the dispute, there were some, I believe, who spoke without full knowledge of the facts.

In the light of events in Korea, I think we should take more seriously than we do the real threat to our political freedom. Neither the people of Canada nor the people of the United States have known a secret police force, but in both countries there are many immigrants who have suffered much at the hands of such a force in Europe. I know a European who came to Canada with very little, and who has since built up a successful business on the coast. When I suggested to him one day soon after his arrival that we take a trip of about seventy-five miles, he asked, "Do we report to the police before we go?" I asked him the reason for his question, and he replied that in Europe he could not drive fifty miles without reporting to the police telling them where he was going, and why, and assuring them that he would return. I said, "But you are now in Canada and you don't have to do that".

Canada could very well, by reason of her unpreparedness for aggression, lose the political freedom that her citizens now enjoy. It must be remembered that there are people in this country who are working in the interests of one of the worst dictatorships the world has ever known. I do not believe these communist sympathizers realize what would happen to them under a communistic regime. Certainly there would be no strikes by labour unions, because the first person to attempt such a move would be liquidated.