

trict. These are the things that are done by these boards through lack of planning, and they disrupt the whole industrial life of the country.

Then we have the cost-plus contracts. The Department of National Defence will take over some building. They will build a barracks or renovate some building they are taking over. They will send some contractor in with a cost-plus contract. Wages mean nothing to him; he will get help. There is no liaison between that job and the Department of Labour or the wartime prices and trade board. By reason of this contract he will pay fabulous wages, wages as high as a journeyman carpenter will get, to men who hardly know one end of a hammer from the other, and he will thus cause discontent in the district, which is a serious matter. I know of instances where high school boys were offered fifty-one cents an hour as helpers—wages higher than the whole wage structure in the district—by some contractor who came in with a job from the Department of National Defence.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): Or by government engineers.

Mr. HOMUTH: These things are done by these various controls, and they have disrupted the whole economic fabric of the country and caused that discontent which we have in industry. We had the spectacle of the steel strike. That strike should never have occurred. I can understand a strike in some munitions factory, and other munitions factories carrying on. But here is an industry that is vital to every munitions factory in the country, an industry that is the very foundation of the munitions which we are making in the various factories in Canada. It was because of the vacillating labour policy of the government that that strike ever occurred, and it was declared illegal. Before that, the Minister of Labour (Mr. Mitchell) and the government should have prevented it from developing. They should never have allowed that board to rise until they had even moved to Ottawa, conferred with the government and brought down some sort of unanimous report. If they had done that there would have been no strike in that industry. But the strike occurred, and it was declared illegal. Then the government started to negotiate with those men who were carrying on an illegal strike, and finally the strike was ended. But what did the government do in making the settlement they did? They froze the cost of living bonus to the steel workers, so that as the cost of living index is reduced the bonus will remain, whereas the cost of living bonus in every other industry will be reduced. What are the

[Mr. Homuth.]

employees in other industries going to say when, as the cost of living index diminishes, their cost of living bonus is reduced while that paid to the steel workers remains frozen? A settlement such as that cannot help stirring up trouble in other industries. Again I say it is because of the lack of force, the lack of sound reason in dealing with these matters, that a great many of the difficulties we have in industry to-day have been brought about.

One of the essentials in working out a manpower policy is that first of all we ought to know, and this house ought to know, how many men we shall require for the air force and how many men we shall require for the army. How many men shall we require for the navy? How many men shall we require for the auxiliary services? How much farm labour shall we require? What shortage, if any, is there of industrial labour in this country? How can this house deal with these matters; how can we discuss them intelligently unless we get information from the government as to what their plans are? Surely it is not giving information to the enemy to say, We are going to raise another fifty thousand men for the air force, or the navy, or the army. Those are things we ought to know. Not since the war started have we had a clear-cut statement to this house.

What is happening to the draftees who are now being called up? What is their position? True, the government was freed from any obligations in regard to them by the vote on the plebiscite, but what is their position to-day? Suppose the Canadian army gets into battle and more and more reinforcements are needed; what is the position of these men who to-day are being called up for service in Canada or Newfoundland or on this continent? Is their position going to be that if a very sudden need is apparent the government overnight can pass an order in council and immediately make these men available for overseas service? The men themselves ought to know what position they are in. These men who are now being called for military training, ostensibly for duty on this continent, ought to know where they stand. The government ought to tell this house what their position is with regard to these men that they are calling. Is it any wonder that at times hon. members say there is no leadership, no guidance in regard to these matters?

Often many of these regulations that do not regulate but that do disorganize are passed simply, it would appear, because of fear of political repercussions. I say that honestly and sincerely. Too often it seems to be done with the political viewpoint in mind. We had one of the most upsetting things happen very