

the reading of your brief or before or at any time you wish if it has not already been answered in the brief you have submitted to the members of the committee. During the inquiry into the cotton industry—and I should like you to refer to the cotton industry only because this question I am now asking you deals with cotton only—it was brought to the attention of the members of the committee that production today in cotton was significantly less than during the war period, and the representatives of the leading companies before the committee said that reduction was due first to the difficulty in getting men and women to build up their second shift particularly, secondly absenteeism, and thirdly that absenteeism on Saturday morning ran as high as 39 per cent in the Montreal mills. I should like you to give your brief now.

The WITNESS: Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee: The first thing I should like to deal with is the widespread impression that high wages are a major cause of high prices.

Mr. LESAGE: Widespread impression where?

The WITNESS: Throughout the testimony, I got the clear impression high prices were due, to a large extent, to the extensive raises given labour.

Mr. IRVINE: Yes, one of the textile men said the day before yesterday that wages had been increased 155 per cent.

Mr. LESAGE: It was a factor; it was not anything else.

The WITNESS: As far as the textile industry is concerned, that is completely without foundation.

In the first place, even after the increases of the last few years, wages in the textile industry generally are not high. In the latest D.B.S. figures, April 1, 1948, average hourly earnings for textile products are the lowest for any group of manufacturing industries except leather products and tobacco, which are fractionally lower. Textiles are 70·6 cents, leather products 70·3, tobacco 69·9. For thread, yarn and cloth and hosiery and knit goods taken together (that is, textile products excluding garments and personal furnishings) the weighted average is 70 cents, which is lower than any other group except tobacco.

By Mr. Winters:

Q. From where was that figure of 70 cents taken?—A. From the D.B.S. report as of April 1, 1948.

Q. Is this a consolidation of certain figures which appeared in that report?—A. This is a consolidation.

Moreover, it must be remembered that these averages are pulled up by the figures for the organized plants. Courtaulds has an average of \$1.053 an hour; Canadian Cottons 78·25 cents; Dominion Textiles 75·18 cents. Even Wabasso, which is only partly organized, has an average of 71·0. Of the 90,000 or so wage earners in the textile industry apart from the clothing trades, only about 35,000 at the very outside are organized in any kind of union. It is safe to say, therefore, that in the unorganized sections the rates are well below the average. But there is no evidence that the unorganized companies are selling their goods any cheaper.

Second, even though the wage increases have been considerable, they have not been reflected in corresponding increases in labour cost, but the increases in price have generally been more than proportional. Between September 1, 1947, and April 1, 1948, average hourly earnings in cottons rose from 60·8 cents to 72·3 cents, an increase of 11·5 cents, or 18·9 per cent.

By Mr. Fleming:

Q. Just there, are those figures taken from our proceedings or a D.B.S. report?—A. Those figures are taken from the proceedings of the committee—oh, no, those are from a D.B.S. report.