

*Fruit Wastage—Containers*

I suggested also that the union security issue should go to arbitration. Mr. Pritchett replied to me in the following words:

If same sentiments existed with operators' representatives as you have expressed dispute could be settled in fifteen minutes.

There you have approval of substantially the same suggestions that were made by Chief Justice Sloan. Mr. Pritchett expressed his approval of that settlement at that time.

Mr. COLDWELL: How long ago was that?

Mr. GIBSON (Comox-Alberni): On May 25.

Mr. MacNICOL: When did the strike start?

Mr. GIBSON (Comox-Alberni): On May 15. Mr. Pritchett, of course, would not miss the opportunity to create any dissension he could, because immediately he received my telegram it was broadcast all around Vancouver and British Columbia that the operators were weakening, that Gibson Brothers and certain of the small operators were looking for a settlement of the strike but that we were coerced into withholding a settlement. That has no foundation in fact at all.

Mr. REID: Have you communicated with him since?

Mr. GIBSON (Comox-Alberni): I have not heard from him since. I do not care to communicate with him any more because, so far as I am concerned, he is entirely unreliable. They took my telegram with reference to fifteen cents an hour increase and a forty-four hour week, and then their paper came out with the statement that Gibson suggested that a fifteen cents an hour increase and a forty-hour week be given. That was absolutely untrue. My suggestion was a forty-four hour week. So that I have lost all sympathy with the leaders of the lumber workers. I feel that Mr. Justice Sloan's report was very fair and an equitable solution of a difficult problem out there. I believe now, unless the government steps in, that if a secret ballot were taken of the lumber workers they would return to work. I was talking with Port Alberni on the long-distance telephone last night. The union had called a meeting there to discuss Mr. Sloan's proposals, and they used the old strong-arm union tactics of no secret ballot. With 400 men there it takes courage for a man to stand up and attempt to go against the wishes of the leaders who want to continue the strike. I just wanted to put that statement on the record in reply to the hon. member for Skeena.

Mr. J. H. BLACKMORE (Lethbridge): Mr. Speaker, now that the British Columbia

[Mr. J. L. Gibson.]

members have expressed themselves with respect to the question of assuring an adequate supply of containers for the British Columbia berry producers, I believe it is fitting that the Alberta members should go on record with regard to this whole question.

We sympathize deeply with the British Columbia fruit growers, first because they live in our sister province of British Columbia, and, second, because they are our fellow agriculturists, fellow tillers of the soil. Theirs are the hazards from weather, disease and insects, and theirs are the anxieties concerning markets and prices which are common to all agriculturists everywhere, wheat growers and all other producers of primary products.

We are perturbed because of the danger too of the loss of great quantities of fruit, first, because it means the loss of food valuable and precious in this time of threatened famine, and, second, because the fruit which the people of Alberta use comes in the main from British Columbia.

We are anxious about the lumber strike. It is hard for us to understand fully this lumber strike, but the remarks of the hon. member for Comox-Alberni (Mr. Gibson) have given us some insight into the whole situation. We deeply regret that some formula has not been found and agreed upon, at least to tide us over a serious situation.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member, but I call his attention to standing order No. 31, which requires that speeches must be relevant to the motion that is before the chair, and the motion before us is to discuss problems in British Columbia. I do not think I should permit the house to discuss what is going on in any other province than the one mentioned in the motion.

Mr. BLACKMORE: I can only guess at what Your Honour is saying, because it is impossible to hear you down here. I shall endeavour to speak loud enough so that Your Honour can hear what I am saying.

It seems to me that some formula ought to have been discoverable somewhere to tide us over not only a serious situation regarding fruit and egg and fish supplies, which are all endangered by the strike, but also a dangerous housing situation from which we are all beginning to suffer across this country.

We see in the situation a warning that the most careful attention must yet be given to the whole matter of equity and stability in our economy. The remarks of the two members who spoke just before me clearly indicate the sharp cleavage of opinion which exists