

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

is now in its third week which means that over 3,000 workers in the valley are without employment. There were initially various issues between the union and the employers, some of them having to do with wages and working conditions, but at the present time the only obstacle to a settlement of this situation, which would enable not only these office workers to conclude an agreement and go to work but which would also enable the members of several other unions to return to employment, is the refusal of the company to agree to any form of union security clause in the settlement.

A union statement indicates they are asking for a union security clause similar to that which now exists in every other agreement their union has in British Columbia. It is also similar to the security clauses in existence in the agreements with other unions—the papermakers, the electrical workers, the international woodworkers of America, and so on.

I feel this is a situation which should not be allowed to continue, if any effort can properly be made to bring it to an end. I have raised this matter because in the field of the International Labour Organization—and I have here volume two of the international labour code, 1951—the matter is expressly dealt with. On page 29 are set out some statements in this connection dating from 1947. I want to point out that the declaration of Philadelphia recognizes the solemn obligation of the International Labour Organization to further among the nations of the world programs which will achieve, among other things, the effective recognition of the right of collective bargaining and that the resolution that was adopted provides for the exercise of the right of freedom of association without fear of intimidation, coercion or restraint from any source. That resolution later became a convention and has been approved by the United Nations.

I should point out that the jurisdiction of the federal Minister of Labour is directly involved in this question, because among those who are now suffering loss of employment are a good many members of the longshoremen's union on the west coast, which of course comes under federal labour jurisdiction. But even apart from that, in view of the fact that the minister of labour and the deputy minister of labour of British Columbia have more or less publicly stated that they are throwing up their hands, that there is nothing more they can do, I feel it is a

situation where the good offices of the federal Minister of Labour might be of some value in bringing this situation to an end.

The last report I have on the situation, which I received this evening, is that at the moment no negotiations are going on and that the only point at issue is the recognition of a minimum security clause, which I think all of us who have any experience in trade union dealings recognize is basic to the protection of the right of free association and free organization. I freely confess that as far as I am concerned I do not think I am in a position personally to use any good offices with Mr. J. V. Clyne, because I have stated on several occasions that I find he acts as an autocratic ruler of a baronial empire, the largest one in British Columbia, and at times appears to me to regard himself as being in a higher position of authority than the government of that province. Indeed, the admission by the provincial minister that he is powerless to cope with this situation I think suggests that the only resort left is for the federal Minister of Labour, with the prestige and backing of Canada's support for the principle involved in the International Labour Organization conventions, to come into the picture and perhaps persuade this gentleman that he should sit down and at least grant to these workers the same rights as have already been won over the years by the other workers in the plant involved, and in the other plants in the Alberni valley.

Mr. J. A. Byrne (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, the federal government, and more specifically the Minister of Labour (Mr. MacEachen), are very deeply concerned that such a large number of people on the west coast are affected by this strike. On the other hand, as the hon. member has himself indicated, it is a matter for the department of labour of the province of British Columbia. Mr. Sands has been endeavouring to bring the two opposing parties together. It may be that he had admitted he is unable to make any progress. Still, Mr. Speaker, this does not provide a vehicle by which the federal Department of Labour can impose their jurisdiction upon those people in British Columbia who come under the jurisdiction of the provincial authority. It is regrettable too that there are employees involved who normally come under the jurisdiction of the Department of Labour, such as seamen and fishermen. However, they are not directly concerned with the labour dispute.

[Mr. Barnett.]