

utilize those plants at Trenton and elsewhere in the county of Pictou for this very important purpose. I have been content not to raise any question about the matter in this house until to-day. I received to-day a telegram transmitting a resolution unanimously passed at a joint meeting of the town councils of the towns of New Glasgow and Trenton and members of the boards of trade of those towns in which they say that they—

—view with alarm the grave crisis now developing in the European war, in which the safety and welfare of our British empire is involved, and the imminent and essential need of all Canadians immediately doing all humanly possible to assist in a great war effort.

And further reciting that:

It appears that the major industry in our locality, with its workmen, have thus far failed to fully use their facilities for the manufacture and production of war munitions, largely due to a continued dispute between the company and workmen over rates of pay, hours of labour and working conditions.

It is with respect to that that I desire to discuss briefly with my hon. friend the Minister of Labour the situation in that section of the country. It is further alleged in this telegram that the large plants of the Trenton steel works and the Eastern Car company are now practically idle and doing nothing towards the war effort by the manufacture of war materials, of which they have a proven capacity, as evidenced in the last war, and as shortly narrated by myself. Then it recites that the differences between the management and workmen of the steel plant to be dealt with by a conciliation board now set up may not be heard and dealt with finally for some considerable time. Then the telegram proceeds:

Therefore be it resolved that we urgently petition the government of Canada, through its departments, to immediately cause action to be taken for the prompt settlement of the differences between the men and the company.

Be it further resolved that we also petition the government of Canada to make available to these companies and the workmen sufficient orders for war materials and munitions so that these industries may be immediately utilized to their greatest capacity.

The minister has been good enough to supply me with a brief statement of the situation existing in that section. I understand that there are no less than three disputes which are presently to be heard.

Mr. McLARTY: That is just in this one case. There are many other boards set up.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): I understand from the memorandum I have received that applications were received as late as May 9 last in the Department of Labour from employees of the Trenton steel works, the Eastern Car company and the New Glasgow

plant of Standard Clay Products Limited, employees of all three plants being members of local No. 1231 of the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers of steel workers' organizing committee. Now I am not sure, I will ask the minister to tell me when he replies, whether that is the Congress of Industrial Organization's union.

Mr. McLARTY: It is.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): Well, I am not concerned about that at all; but it is further represented that the dispute in each company arose in connection with the employees' request for increased wages, and that employees' representatives were quite willing to have one board deal with all three disputes, but that the company in its reply pointed out that about March 1 last the officials and union executives met for the purpose of discussing wages and working conditions at Trenton and as a result of these negotiations an increase of 7½ per cent was granted and certain other adjustments made. Without going into details of the subsequent steps it would appear that this arrangement was not ratified by the union officials, that the matter came to a strike vote and that then a conciliation board was applied for. The company appointed a gentleman in Halifax, whom I know very well, Mr. Russell McInnes, K.C., and the men appointed Mr. Wren. I am further informed that either the parties, through their representatives, or the department—I am not sure which—agreed upon Professor MacKenzie of the university of Toronto as chairman of the board, but that as yet the board has not functioned, that for more than a month there has been delay and nothing has been done. As a result, while some work is going on in that locality under agreements which had previously expired, this festering sore is still there and, so far as I know, there has been no move made to get this conciliation board to function.

I am not concerned with the merits of this dispute. I do not know enough about it to express any opinion, and I do not think it would be my function to do so even if I had information. I am rising to ask the minister to see that this board gets on with its job and reaches a final conclusion so that industry and labour in that district may get back into union. Then we will see if something cannot be done by way of getting some munition or war supply orders in that part of the country, which has demonstrated on many occasions that it can do a good job.

Mr. MARTIN: That is true of other places.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): I am not suggesting that it is not.

Mr. MARTIN: Just generally.