

could command, how the situation appeared to me. Neither the Minister of Labour nor the Prime Minister replied to my letter; all I received was an acknowledgment from a secretary. There may have been this excuse for the Prime Minister; he went overseas about then, and by the time he returned the matter was probably settled and forgotten. There may also have been some excuse for the Minister of Labour, because about that time other labour troubles called him to the maritimes. But I am referring to this case because in my opinion it shows clearly the impossibility of the government's labour policy securing the confidence and support of labour.

This dispute with the National Steel Car Corporation began on February 3, 1941, when the employees made application for a board. It went on and on until, toward the end of July, the employees went on strike for the second or third time. It will be remembered that in April of this year the government appointed a controller, Mr. E. J. Brunning, to manage the National Steel Car plant when the company refused to accept an interim report made by a conciliation board. I believe the appointment was unfortunate, because if there is one man in Canada who has no regard for organized labour and no sympathy with the aims of organized labour, that man is Mr. E. J. Brunning. At the time I congratulated the government on its action, but I am afraid I was a little too hasty in doing so. Three months later, in July, I found that the controller, who had been appointed by the government because the former management would not carry out the interim order of a conciliation board, had on the instructions of the government refused to enter into an agreement with the labour organization in that plant. On July 15 Mr. H. B. Chase, who at that time was director of labour relations in the Department of Munitions and Supply, made a statement with regard to an agreement between the controller of the corporation and the employees, I believe in a letter to the Minister of Labour, although I am not sure on that point. In any event the statement was made, in these words:

I also stated to the committee that it was my understanding of government policy that Mr. Brunning could not negotiate with a union as a union or to sign an agreement with a union, but fair and reasonable conditions could be arranged for by regulations agreed upon between all parties.

That was on July 15. On July 22 the Minister of Labour, in a letter to Mr. C. H. Millard, who is Director of the Steelworkers' Organizing Committee in Canada, also made a statement, and I should like hon.

members to note the similarity between the words used by the minister and those used by Mr. Chase. The minister said:

I believe that you will understand that Mr. Brunning, as controller, could not negotiate with the union as a union, or sign an agreement with a union, but the regulations which are agreed upon between all parties should form fair and reasonable conditions under which the work of the plant should be carried on.

I do not listen very often to Charlie McCarthy on the radio; but almost every time I have occasion to deal with matters concerning the Department of Labour and the Department of Munitions and Supply, I am reminded of Charlie McCarthy and Edgar Bergen. May I ask why Mr. Brunning could not sign an agreement with the union, as a union? Is there any reason why a government-controlled industry cannot recognize a union and sign an agreement with it? If a government-controlled industry cannot enter into an agreement with its organized workers, then I ask, what becomes of collective bargaining? How are you going to carry on collective bargaining in any government-controlled industry? I want to point out to the Minister of Labour and to the Prime Minister as well, because he is responsible for the acts of his ministers, that in June, 1940, the government passed an order in council stating that they were in favour of the principle of collective bargaining. What becomes of that order in council as far as the National Steel Car employees are concerned? What becomes of it as far as any government-owned or government-controlled industry is concerned, if the Minister of Labour can say over his signature that the manager of that industry cannot enter into an agreement with the union as a union? These are questions which must be answered, and it seems to me they are going to be very, very difficult to answer.

Later the matter was settled; but the Minister of Munitions and Supply, who evidently runs the Department of Labour as well as his own department, was not satisfied with that situation. We find him taking the position that any number of different organizations can be recognized in any one industry. I claim that by this action, by making this statement, by taking this position, the government, through the Minister of Munitions and Supply, is fostering a company unionism, making it impossible for the workers to organize and stabilize labour relations in industry. I want to say most emphatically that by this action, instead of making for peace and harmony in industry the government is making for strife and confusion. I want to know how they are going to carry on in future, because we are not going to get the support of organized labour