

Legislation Respecting Railway Matters

Mr. Speaker, to have the government's chickens coming home to roost, but it is worse when parliament has to deal with them and the Canadian people have to pay for them.

Over the years both the major political parties of this country have failed to introduce machinery for effective collective bargaining between the railways and their employees. They have allowed the railway companies to bamboozle both government and parliament into introducing compulsory arbitration and then into picking up the tab for any wage increases which may ensue.

Many labour leaders in Canada and the United States have been saying quite openly that the strike is outmoded as an industrial weapon in our modern society, that it has now become a blunt instrument which not only affects the economy but adversely affects even those who take part in it. The only way that strikes can be averted is to set up the kind of machinery that will prevent strikes and which will promote genuine collective bargaining on the part of both parties.

This is not impossible, Mr. Speaker. A country like Sweden has established economic stability without any denial of fundamental rights. That country has gone for more than a quarter of a century without a major strike because there has been provided both to management and labour effective machinery for negotiation and collective bargaining.

However, the Prime Minister may gift-wrap this bill, it is imposing compulsory arbitration. Earlier this afternoon the Secretary of State for External Affairs interrupted the Leader of the Opposition to say that the right to go on strike was a basic civil right. But according to the government, staying on strike is not a basic civil right. For them the right to bargain collectively as to wages, conditions of labour and the terms on which workers on strike will return to work is not a basic civil right. Under this bill the worker has not the right to stay on strike or the right to say under what terms and conditions he will go back to work.

I am opposed, Mr. Speaker, to compulsory arbitration. I do not think the government should have allowed itself to get into the impasse in which it now finds itself. But now parliament has no choice but to ask the railway workers to go back to work in the interests of the welfare of the public. In this as in any other case the national interest must take precedence. But that cannot justify trampling upon the basic rights of this group of workers or of any other group of workers.

[Mr. Douglas.]

We in the New Democratic Party believe that it is possible to bring about a resumption of work while at the same time preserving the principle of free collective bargaining.

The government proposes to force the men back to work on the basis of a wage settlement of 4 per cent from January 1 and 4 per cent from July 1 of this year, which over the entire calendar year amounts to a 6 per cent increase. The government leaves the wages for 1967 to arbitration if an agreement is not reached as a result of negotiation. We might as well face the fact that any negotiation under a mediator which takes place between now and November 15 will be a farce. It will be a pointless waste of time. Does anyone think that the railway companies will seriously negotiate when they know that by stalling until November 15 compulsory arbitration will follow? Does anyone think that the railway companies will make a genuine offer when they know that in the event of compulsory arbitration any offer which they have made will become the floor in the consideration of those who are called upon to arbitrate and to settle the final wage bill?

So what the government is doing, Mr. Speaker, is fixing the wages for this year and leaving to the tender mercies of an arbitration tribunal what will be the wages of the railway workers in 1967. I think it is significant that although this legislation contains terms that will fix the railway workers' wages for this year and will leave the arbitration board to fix the wages for next year, there are no provisions for restricting the profits made by the railway companies. Nothing is said about holding down the profits of the railway companies to 6 per cent.

This morning's *Globe and Mail* carries an interesting item datelined Montreal which indicates that for the first seven months of this year, ended July 31, the profits of the Canadian Pacific Railway amounted to \$30,266,322 compared with \$22,535,679 for the first seven months of the previous year. That represents an increase in profits in the first seven months of this year for the Canadian Pacific Railway of 34.2 per cent. So the railways have done pretty well.

If one looks at the financial statements of the Canadian Pacific Railway one notices that 1958 was for a long time their banner year in achieving peak railway revenue. But in 1964 this figure was surpassed; it went up to \$510 million, a 1 per cent increase. In 1965 railway revenue amounted to \$518 million, an increase of \$7.9 million or 1½ per cent. For the