

*Labour Conditions*

down to real collective bargaining and bargaining in good faith, not when they were making that kind of inventory build-up.

● (2120)

Bargaining began with Abitibi in May, 1975. The strike began in July, after an attempt at conciliation failed. We have other evidence that the companies were not interested in good faith bargaining, that they had a secret arrangement to supply one another in the event of a strike should any company run short of supplies. My colleague, the hon. member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez), will elaborate on this.

What really threw the monkey wrench into the collective bargaining process, besides companies that were not ready to bargain in good faith, was the Liberal government in October, 1975, bringing in a wage control program. Make no mistake about it, that is what it is. It is not a wage and price control program, but a wage control program.

The paperworkers' unions were naturally shocked. They assumed there was some sense of principle left with the Liberal government. They read the white paper that said we will set out a guideline of a 10 per cent increase, but we will look at such things as historical relationships, as they did in the case of inside postal workers and letter carriers.

The paperworkers' union bargained in good faith, assuming that the Anti-Inflation Board would look at the natural historical wage relationship between paperworkers and woodland workers. They thought they would get a fair hearing from the Anti-Inflation Board set up by the government. The companies knew better. The people of Canada certainly know better now about the kind of justice they can get from the Anti-Inflation Board.

While this process was going on with regard to the Irving Company in New Brunswick, the other paper companies throughout the country were not bargaining in good faith. They were hiding behind the anti-inflation guidelines and waiting to see what would happen in the Irving case. The necessity for a speedy decision was evident. We tried to get some kind of information. We put pressure on the Anti-Inflation Board through the government to get a speedy decision so that the bargaining process could resume.

The Irving settlement of a 23 per cent wage increase in the first year was turned down by the Anti-Inflation Board. It ignored entirely the legitimate historical wage relationship between woodland workers and paperworkers. If we think of any sense of elementary justice, surely at the stage when the Anti-Inflation Board turned down the wage settlement the workers who are directly involved as well as the company, who without a strike reached that 23 per cent wage agreement and under provincial labour legislation were bound to abide by that collective agreement, surely both parties should have had the right to appeal to the Anti-Inflation Board and argue their case or get an appeal beyond the Anti-Inflation Board. However, that is not the way the government sets up legislation. The way this legislation is set up, it—becomes very hard. The government does not want appeals. It does not want workers to argue in a logical fashion. It would rather provoke them to go out on strike in defiance of the law of the land.

[Mr. Symes.]

The only way you can get an appeal under this farce of a law the government has created is for the company first of all to disobey the recommendation of the Anti-Inflation Board for a wage rollback. Only by challenging the ruling of the Anti-Inflation Board can the case then go to the administrator. Only when the administrator makes a ruling, and then one of the parties launches an appeal against the administrator—

**An hon. Member:** The employer.

**Mr. Symes:** That is the point I am coming to. We assume that, if we had natural justice, either the labourers directly involved by the administrator's decisions through a wage rollback or the company would have the right of appeal. However, the recent decision by the administrator in the Irving case indicates that only the party which the decision was charged against, in this case the company, has the right of appeal to the appeals tribunal.

Where is the elementary sense of justice in that? Only one party, the party that the administrator directly makes a ruling on, can appeal. The thinking behind the administrator's decision is confidential. How can you launch an appeal if you do not know how to argue against the ruling you are trying to appeal because you cannot see the evidence? That kind of a system is a farce and a sham.

We hear from the Liberal members that there is the right of appeal to the cabinet under Section 24. That is a real impartial body. My God, Mr. Speaker, it is the very minds that designed the legislation in the first place. They designed the controls program to thwart the appeals procedure process. Do you think you can get a fair hearing before the cabinet? Can you argue your case? Can you engage in dialogue with the cabinet? This afternoon in this House we heard the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) say everything is fine. He does not see anything wrong with the principle of this procedure. This evening the Minister of Labour skirted the issue entirely. What kind of reception or hearing will working people get under that situation? It is incredible to think that there is any real appeal procedure in this legislation.

This anti-inflation program set up by the government and administered by the Anti-Inflation Board and the administrator is one step closer to the destruction of basic human rights in this country. Let us not make any mistake about it. When you look at the government you see that at a moment's notice it could introduce the War Measures Act that destroyed civil liberties and threw people in jail without real evidence. Now we see this kind of program and what it does to natural justice in terms of appeal. Before, we had a War Measures Act. Today, we have a wage measures act. We are coming one step closer to authoritarianism and the destruction of the collective bargaining process.

The government deliberately set out to have the Irving Paper Company fined. It was not interested in hearing appeals on a rational basis or considering historical relationships. It wanted to make an example of this dispute between the paperworkers union and the Irving Company as a signal to every other corporation in this country that if they dared go beyond the guidelines they would get the kind of treatment that Irving got.