

ably in recent years. In the fall of 1936, it was 9½ to 14 cents; at the outbreak of the war, it was 16 to 21 cents; now, even allowing for cost of living bonus, it is from 22½ to 28½ cents, or more than double what it was in 1936. (These figures are from the international office of the steel union, and, for the three major Canadian basic steel plants, from evidence placed before the Commission. All the figures, indeed, were put in sworn evidence before the Commission. I may add that I have myself checked them as far as I could, and am sure that they are substantially correct. The rates vary from plant to plant in Canada, of course; while in the United States the base rate is now uniform, except for the Southern mills, about ten per cent. of the industry.) In the fall of 1936, Canadian rates were above those in Southern mills; now, they are, even allowing for cost of living bonus, 5 to 10 cents below Southern rates; and the South is notoriously a depressed wage area. At Algoma, the increase the union is asking for would, allowing for the present cost of living bonus, just bring hourly remuneration for workers on base rate up to the Southern level; at Sydney, it would bring it to a point slightly above Southern rates, but not as far above as Sydney was in the fall of 1936:

The cost of living bonus is another funny thing. The Wage Control Order is so drafted that the bonus at Algoma works out to \$2.53 a week, and at Sydney to \$4.25 a week (legally). This brings base rate plus bonus at Algoma to 50½ cents, and at Sydney to 52½ cents; so that the plant with the higher base rate actually is paying its men less per hour than the plant with a lower base rate. Moreover, the Abitibi plant at the Soo pays a starting rate of 56 cents an hour (this is, of course, not for skilled papermakers, whose starting rates are from 68 to 71 cents an hour); and the bonus there is \$3.23 a week. This, I need hardly add, is very difficult to explain to the Algoma steel workers.

There were some peculiar things about the Commission, too, which help to fill in the background. J.C. McRuer, whom you doubtless know, was Commission counsel. I think he meant to ~~be~~ be fair; but his cross-examination of the first union witnesses at the Soo was so severe that the union secretary protested that continuance of the same sort of thing would make it next to impossible to get any more workmen to testify. McRuer at once apologized, and after that did his cross-examination very differently. But at Sydney, in my presence, he actually read the Company's brief, though the ~~Company's~~ Company's lawyer was present; surely a breach of proper procedure, and one likely to create in the minds of the men a feeling that the Commission counsel was siding with the employers. Then, when the reports were being drawn up, Barlow refused to let Gordon see the majority report. So Gordon told a friend of mine; and his minority report shows that he was telling the truth, for it contains his concurrence in a majority recommendation which does not appear in the majority report at all! I understand Gordon's protest against this procedure is on file in the office of the Minister of Labour.

The sum and substance of it all is that the men are in a very suspicious and distrustful frame of mind. They have no use at all for King and less than none for Mitchell. They put in their first application for increase in November 1941. They were told to go to

The present
base rate
in the North
is 78½ cents;
in the South,
60½.