

In the past the British North America Act has been cited by the government as the reason for our having no national labour code. To an extent this does present some difficulties, but there is nothing to prevent parliament at this session from passing a national labour code covering government services, crown companies, government contractors, transportation services, such as railways, steamships, canals, et cetera.

A proper labour code covering these employments would be an indication of good faith on the part of the federal government and would lend encouragement to the provincial governments to join in the national code, or to make their own in conformity with it. It would constitute an example and a model. It would help greatly to achieve industrial stability and industrial peace throughout Canada.

The national code should provide for the certification of trade unions; make possible collective bargaining in keeping with present-day trends in harmonious labour-management relations; provide for minimum wages sufficient to establish decent standards of living, maximum working hours, a minimum age for those entering employment, equal pay for equal work, regardless of sex; vacations and statutory holidays with pay, and the setting up of administrative machinery truly representative of labour, management and government.

I do not suggest that the obligations of the government would be concluded with the passage of such legislation. I believe that there rests upon the federal government a responsibility to give leadership, and that the government should at once summon a dominion-provincial conference on labour relations to set in motion plans for what might be called a charter of industrial peace and progress of Canada. This is a matter distinct from the taxation problems now occupying the attention of a dominion-provincial conference, and should be considered separately. At such a conference, an attempt should be made to secure agreement on the major principles of labour relations on their merits, and an agreement on the part of the provinces to pass the required uniform statutes to bring about a standardized procedure from coast to coast in Canada. It is not enough to pay lip service to the cause of labour. Definite and specific action is required if labour is to be brought into that real partnership in our economy without which harmonious and proper national development is impossible. The goal of full employment can be achieved only by a true partnership of labour, industry, agriculture and the government. This goal cannot be achieved

unless we can find a way to lessen the losses of time, wages, money and production that arise, if our economy is constantly disturbed by strikes and lockouts.

I come now to another matter not mentioned in the speech from the throne, a matter which was the subject of a good deal of discussion here last year. I refer to the question of orders in council. The Canadian government claims to be a responsible government. Parliament delegates sparingly its authority to the government, yet in war time much of its legislation was enacted by order in council, sometimes behind the back of parliament and even when parliament was sitting. Once the war was over it was expected that this practice would cease. We fought this issue in the last session of parliament. Parliament nevertheless granted the government a modified form of this authority. In doing so we were assured by the government, or so we understood, not only that orders in council would be made available to us but that there were no secret orders in council. It now transpires that there was at least one secret order which had been in existence for two months at the very time the government gave us the assurance that there were none. We were misled generally on the question of there being no more secret orders, and we were misled specifically when the Minister of Justice (Mr. St. Laurent) stated, as reported in *Hansard* of December 6, 1945, at page 3026:

That is not a secret order, and there are no secret orders.

I feel sure the Minister of Justice did not mean to mislead this house, but I say quite frankly that when that statement was made we were misled, because there was then in existence a secret order in council which came to light only a few weeks ago. Last session parliament granted the government special emergency powers, but these were granted in the expectation that no orders in council would be withheld from us. We certainly had a right to expect that the government would not mislead us in so serious a matter. Whatever justification the government can now make for having passed this secret order in council, it certainly misled this house last year. Will the government say now whether there are any other secret orders in existence?

The speech from the throne states that demobilization is proceeding rapidly and that most of the veterans are home with the exception of a few in the occupation army. This government has had much to say about the status of Canada as a nation. It has spread abroad the idea that Canada is to play its part as an important power in the maintenance of international peace. It has sub-