

employment. This is a very serious position and one that ought to engage the attention of the Department of Labour, and engage it forthwith. We on this side of the House have no desire to make political capital out of these labour disputes. If any such capital has been made out of them, I am not going beyond the line of my duty when I say that the Postmaster General, in addressing the electors from one end of Canada to the other has pointed out that if the government is entitled to confidence for one thing more than another it is because it has established a Labour Bureau, which from time to time adjusts the labour difficulties which may arise.

I want to enter my protest against the statement made here: that foreign agitators are at the bottom of all this trouble. It is an insult to the Canadian workman to say that foreign agitators whom he never saw before can come to Montreal, Toronto or anywhere else, and can induce Canadian workmen to leave their employment and demand unreasonable terms. Such a statement is absurd. It needs only to be mentioned to be scouted at once. Canadian workmen have had organizations from one end of Canada to the other for the past half century, and the record of these unions is the best possible answer to the charge made against Canadian workmen as to their unreasonable demands. I myself have had the honour of belonging to one of these organizations for about thirty-five years. That organization has had an existence in Canada for nearly three-quarters of a century; and during that long period, on only two, or at most three occasions, were the most amicable relations which exist between the employers and the men, in any degree strained. The great bulk of the men who compose the labour unions in Canada are men whose interests are identified most closely with the interests of their employers and the interests of the country. They are most reasonable men; they are conservative in their methods. They do not desire to create a condition of things that will compel them to strike. Striking is the last resort in the case of the great majority of them, because as the hon. member for Nanaimo (Mr. Smith) has pointed out, no matter what may be the result of the strike, ultimately they are the sufferers. Those against whom they strike do not in the end suffer, because, as my hon. friend from Centre Toronto (Mr. Brock) has pointed out, the other parties to the difficulty eventually compel the public to bear the losses to which they have been subjected. Even if the workmen be successful, it takes them a very long time out of the additional wages they receive, to recoup themselves for the losses they incurred during the time they were demanding their rights. I do not desire to prolong this discussion, but there is one phase of it, in relation to the efforts which the government is making

Mr. CLARKE.

to settle the matter, on which I desire to say a word or two. We are bound and we are ready to accept most fully the statement made by the Minister of Labour in respect to the action of the government during the past month or two to bring this difficulty to a satisfactory settlement. But is there not too much mystery about the methods which the government are employing? The Postmaster General made the statement that when the President of the United States interfered—and interfered wisely and patriotically—to bring that tremendous conflict between labour and capital to a satisfactory settlement, he appointed commissioners to represent him. But let me point out that the people of the United States were apprised at once as to the action of the President, as to who represented him, and as to what lines the attempts made to bring about the settlement, were based upon.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. It was many months after the strike.

Mr. CLARKE. I am speaking now of the time when the President intervened, and he at once apprised the people of what was being done hour by hour and day by day.

The POSTMASTER GENERAL. My recollection is that the strike began in March, and that the President did not intervene until September.

Mr. CLARKE. But the moment the President did intervene the public were apprised of all that was going on, and the hands of the President were strengthened, because the public were at his back. I am satisfied that if the Minister of Labour would take the House and the country into his confidence, and tell us who are representing him in Montreal and what their instructions are, then if the instructions commend themselves, as I have no doubt they will, to the majority of the people of Canada, the hands of the minister would be upheld, public opinion would be focussed upon this trouble, and a settlement would probably be reached sooner than it otherwise would.

One word as to the affiliation of Canadian labour unions with the American unions. No Canadian union is obliged to affiliate with a union on the other side. The advantages of affiliation are mutual. Unfortunately, up to the present time, aye and at the present time, a greater number of men belonging to Canadian unions go to the United States to seek employment, than do American labour unionists come from the United States over here. The international card is a substantial advantage to the members of the Canadian unions, and that card has never been dishonoured by the unions on the other side. That card forms a bond of union between the workmen on both sides of the line, and the reason the Canadian unionists identify themselves with