

*Labour Conditions*

We do not know, Mr. Speaker, for what we are legislating. Did you ever hear of anything so ridiculous? The minister comes into the house with a bill and the government says they want it approved. But we do not know what we will be voting on. We do not know what is in the mind of the commissioner, who has not yet made his study. This is bad legislation in that it imposes compulsory arbitration and destroys the collective bargaining process. It is an example of a devious tactic by the government in making a deal with the company and not spelling it out to the union.

The minister would have us believe that those representing the union are not telling the truth. As a member of parliament, a supporter of labour and as a Conservative I feel that this makeshift, anti-labour type of legislation must be rejected, must be voted down. We should wait until the report is made, until we see what are the recommendations of the commissioner, and get the reactions of the company and of the men. Who knows, Mr. Speaker, there may be no necessity for any legislation. We cannot tell until we see the report, and as yet there is no report.

This kind of approach, which imposes settlement on terms which are not yet known, destroys faith in parliament and in the government—that is, if many people still have much faith in this government. One of the rights of labour is not to be considered guilty until proven guilty. Labour has rights and management has rights. This bill should certainly be held back. We should vote for the amendment moved by the hon. member for York South to refer the bill to a standing committee.

Before the dinner hour this afternoon we had the amazing spectacle of the minister of manpower, or the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration (Mr. Marchand)—whichever you prefer to call him—who is responsible for matters respecting labour in this country, in many respects coming out with what amounted to a defence of compulsory arbitration. Can you imagine, Mr. Speaker, that this hon. gentleman, with his long and excellent record in the labour movement, would make the speech he did this afternoon? I found it rather difficult to realize that he was making the type of speech that he was. He said he was not in on the negotiations, and I for one feel that he should have been. With his long experience and his good record he should have been in on the negotiations. If the

Minister of Transport was, then we might as well have had some of the fat cats around, such as the Minister of Finance (Mr. Sharp), the “minister” from Davenport, and a few of these great champions of labour. We could have had them around. I am sure they would have worried about the union and the workmen.

● (8:30 p.m.)

This afternoon the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration defended the government's action in this matter. He defended a procedure through which parliament is asked to make into law recommendations that are not yet revealed. Am I correct in assuming that the former union leader, now the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, is saying that the present leader of the Canadian Labour Congress is not telling the truth? Would this be the right interpretation, I wonder? Would it be correct to assume, from the remarks that have been made, that the minister defended a situation where parliament is asked to impose the terms of a collective bargaining agreement between the parties, which have been arrived at by a government appointed commission?

The minister is defending the setting out of conditions dictated by the companies and approved by the Minister of Labour. As I have already said, I feel badly about that. I feel that the Minister of Labour is misdirected and misguided, because in his other portfolios he has done an excellent job of bailing out the Prime Minister and this government. Certainly, I hope that he will listen to reason and take another tack on this occasion.

One of the major points in dispute is the size of work gangs. This was the issue of most concern to the companies. The minister as I understand it, said that he would settle this question through the commission. Parliament would make the report of that commission binding, even without seeing it.

The unions categorically refused to reduce work gangs. Whether the unions were right is not the issue at the moment. The point is that the size of work gangs was one of the major matters between the parties. Through the companies' request the minister has removed this matter from the area of collective bargaining and made it a matter of compulsion. If there is any other interpretation than the one I mentioned I should like to hear it. Regardless of how long and how hard the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration shouted in this house this afternoon, I am