

*Correspondence on Surcharges*

Referring to the provisions of the resolution before us, I fully understand that labour-management co-operation is a factor of success in any industry. As a matter of fact, I was responsible for negotiation of collective agreements for 10 years in the logging industry, and I am happy to say that we have always been able to come to an agreement without having to strike anywhere at any time.

The employee is a human being, not a machine. He is optimistic, but also proud; he is fair and honest. What he wants first of all is security and stability. He wants his place of work to be properly organized and managed. He wants to be treated with fairness.

In addition, he wants to be respected as a person; he wants freedom to take part in community activities. He wants appreciation for a job well done, an opportunity for advancement, a friendly place to work, a boss he can respect.

In addition, the worker wants factual information on business conditions. Finally, he wants a fair income.

Those are basic aspirations of a human being which a dynamic industrial relations service must try to understand and meet.

In order to do that, they must tackle a big problem because they will be dealing with a purely abstract question, people's attitudes, their motivations, interests, fears, personal problems and the most sensitive thing in the world, the human being.

However, if everyone tries to grasp the meaning of his role, it is quite likely that common grounds of understanding will be found. Indeed, that is what everybody hopes for. In passing, I should like to point out that a body like the one it is now proposed to establish, will have to depend on the full and active co-operation of the other existing organizations which, unfortunately, discourage the workers with their old-fashioned modes of application.

Here is a case in point. The manner in which the unemployment insurance contributions of forest workers are computed is not in accord with the number of hours during which he works in any one week; it often happens that the lumberjack, when he is lucky enough not to live too far from home, stops working on Saturday afternoon. Now, as contributions must be paid in a lump sum for a six day week, when he works only five and a half days in a week, his contributions must be computed on this basis in order to comply with the terms of the act. In this way, and as the result of such computation,

[Mr. Dionne.]

the worker loses a whole week of contributions over a twelve week period. This is not much encouragement for him. Yet he has had good earnings all week, as he often works overtime.

I also could point out the difficulties he meets with when trying to check his unemployment insurance book from time to time, and even to obtain it when he leaves the camp. I have often had occasions to intervene in situations of this kind.

As we can foresee negotiations for a shorter work week—which labor organizations are trying to obtain, and I commend them for it—I am doing my best, by way of negotiation, and when circumstances are favourable, to improve the lot of all workers and more particularly of the forest workers I am representing.

We should give greater flexibility to all existing labour legislation because the present situation brings about administrative complications and much trouble for the worker who has not always the advantage of being made aware of changes in regulations, bylaws or other decrees which rule the various zones or sectors of work.

We notice the same anomalous situation in the case of temporary railway employees, who are entitled to certain days of leave, based on a ten hour day, when the average man works eight hours a day. It is an absurdity, but it is a fact.

We also note the delay in finding some area of agreement to extend the benefits of the Unemployment Insurance Act to the thousands of Canadian workers employed in American territory. This problem has been under discussion for years. Some members had even risked their seat, putting it at stake to bring about a solution to that problem. We are on very good terms with our neighbours when it comes to solving disputes—Colombo plans, if you like—but we cannot agree to solve the problem of 5,000 to 6,000 workers who have no income after having worked in the states of Maine or New Hampshire. This is an absurdity.

I can well understand that such a project, as seen by a Social Creditor, seems rather easy to apply, because, as you may have noted in the various speeches made, we are not paralysed by the famous tight money policy. In our views, the wealth of this country is in its products. We Social Crediters see wealth in things rather than in signs. That is the difference, because that system is the bane of our time, this terrible scourge that we call the fear of tomorrow, which makes our hair white prematurely, and probably leads a great number to the cemetery also before