

Government Orders

between the various nations making up the Union of South Slavs, Yugoslavia. It just does not work.

That is what we are getting into, legislation that will wipe out all bargaining rights, legislation which will say what will be the position of the employees for the next three years, and we are going to make them like it.

The President of the Treasury Board said that once this legislation is passed, he is prepared to meet with the representatives of the employees and have a cup of tea, I suppose.

I do not know what else they could do together with that legislation facing the representatives of the public employees. We do not have to jump. As I said earlier, I am hoping that the discussions that are now going on will mean that we will not be jumping, we will be backing up and taking a saner look at what has been going on.

The representatives of the employees, to my knowledge, have always said they are ready to bargain. They have not set any preconditions, they have set certain goals. They wanted some progress toward equal pay for work of equal value, they wanted some progress toward privatizing government services, and they wanted job security. The President of the Treasury Board said: "We have been negotiating for 60 days and we have made no progress". What kind of progress, what kind of negotiations?

First let us look at the pay increase that, to the best of my knowledge, was never talked about by the union, but it is always one of the things that unions would like to bring up. The budget said you can have a 3 per cent pay increase in the first year, as long as you will accept the fact that the total cost of wages must remain the same. It is the ones at the bottom rungs who will be laid off because he also said we are going to have to lay off enough so that there will be no increase in the cost of wages. That would mean to the union that if you want to accept layoffs of perhaps one in twenty of the people working in the Public Service, then the remaining ones working can share a 3 per cent wage increase. In the second year, a 3 per cent increase again and another 3 per cent in the third year.

He said: "You have until June to accept this. No point in talking, we will not talk about it at all, that is the condition; you have to accept it now and know that one in twenty of your comrades is going to be laid off, or

don't accept it and then you will get a zero per cent wage increase for those who are working for the government".

I have to wonder, was the government being deliberately confrontational? Was the President of the Treasury Board on behalf of the government hoping to push the union into a position where it could not possibly say yes? How could any union leader accept those conditions? A zero per cent wage increase and then 3 and then 3—up to 3. He never said they would get 3 per cent in the second year or 3 per cent in the third year; that was the maximum. It could be anything under that. One knows, too, what can happen to legislation in the second year and the third year.

Those kinds of conditions expect the union to accept that in the first year of a contract it is in effect going to be receiving dollars this year that will be worth 6 per cent less; for every hundred dollars it got it would buy \$6 less in value than it would the year before. In other words, it is taking a pay decrease of 6 per cent in the first year, and it is supposed to accept that graciously, and then accept a further decrease in the second year of perhaps one, two, three per cent, we do not know. We do not know that it is going to be a 3 per cent increase, nor do we have any idea at all what inflation will be in the second year. The workers have to sign a contract saying that they are prepared to live within 3 per cent, but the government is signing no contract to say that inflation will not be any more than 6 or 5 or 4 or 3 or 2 or 10 per cent.

There is no agreement on the government side that it is going to control it. It wants to, it has set its targets, but certainly its success in meeting those targets in the last seven years of Tory rule would indicate to me that it is going to be somewhere in the vicinity—maybe half way or something like that—but certainly it has not met with any degree of success in reaching the targets it has established for inflation, for interest rates, for deficit, for debt. None of those targets has been anywhere near met. And yet the workers are supposed to believe that if they accept this sacrifice then the government will meet its targets and they will not be any worse off than the government predicts in making this offer to them.

Is the union leader supposed to accept that and go back to his union members, 150,000 strong, and say: "This is the deal I made, aren't I great?" Can you imagine just how long that union leader would last? Madam Speaker, if you were voting, would you vote for that kind of a leader? Nobody could accept that. The President of the Treasury Board knows that could not be acceptable. He knew that the union would never agree to