

a coincidence, it is rather a remarkable one.

Mr. MACDONALD: Rather a synchronism.

Mr. NEELY: Then the minister leaves the country.

Mr. CARROLL: Of course the minister leaves the country. There is something else for which I think blame attaches to the hon. Minister of Labour. He has the chance of his life to study the most acute labour conditions that have ever existed in this country, and yet at that very time he goes to the Old Country to study labour conditions. Why did he not stay in British Columbia, where there was a beautiful field for study? There was an open book. There was the most acute labour situation which has ever existed in this country, while there was peace in England at the time. Notwithstanding that fact, the Minister of Labour told this country that British Columbia did not afford him at that time a good field for the study of labour conditions. I fear that the Minister of Labour did not do all that he should have done in reference to this matter.

The labour people are perhaps the most independent, from a political standpoint, of any people in this Dominion. A great many of them are Socialists; and I have not a word to say against the Socialists. Some of their creeds are all right. The leaders of these organizations are non-partisan in politics. They give credit where credit is due, and they criticise adversely where they think adverse criticism is necessary.

On November 9, 1913, Mr. J. C. Watters, who is neither a Liberal nor a Conservative—and my hon. friend will probably agree with me in that—who is president of the Dominion Trades and Labour Congress, issued a statement to the press that the Minister of Labour was unwilling to carry out the promise which he had previously made to appoint a board to assist in the adjustment of the Nanaimo dispute. There must have been something behind that statement. That statement has not been contradicted up to the present time, either in the public press or in this House. That statement, coming from a source independent from a political standpoint, has considerable weight in my mind.

On December 23, the executive of the Dominion Trades and Labour Congress issued a circular letter complaining that the Minister of Labour had refused to

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appoint a board of conciliation when asked to do so by members of the congress. I am not sure that the members of the congress were in a position to ask for that board. I am not sufficiently well acquainted with the facts, but I am prepared to say that they could have placed themselves in that position and the probabilities are that they did so, because no doubt some of them belonged to the union in British Columbia. My hon. friend the Minister of Labour knows, better than I do, what action would be necessary in order to ask for a board of conciliation. The Minister of Labour may say that at that particular time the members of that congress had not placed themselves in a position to ask for a board of conciliation. Under the circumstances, that is no defence. If they were not in a position, the Minister of Labour the custodian of the labour interests of this country, should have shown them how to place themselves in such a position.

During one of the labour troubles, previous to the strike of 1909 in the province of Nova Scotia, the labour organization there, the Provincial Workmens' Association, had some trouble with the operators. The leader of that organization undertook to carry out the procedure necessary in order to ask for a board of conciliation. He made some technical mistake, some blunder in procedure; but instead of refusing to grant the board of conciliation, the then Minister of Labour, Mr. Mackenzie King, wrote him a letter explaining how he could put himself in a position, showing him where he had made a mistake in procedure, showing him where he had fallen short in calling a properly constituted meeting of the workmen around the mine in order to ask for this board of conciliation. In a week the labour organization of Nova Scotia placed themselves in that position and the board of conciliation was granted. As a result that labour trouble was averted.

My hon. friend the Minister of Labour has said that he never met two classes of people, the miners of British Columbia who were on strike and the operators, who were more difficult to make an arrangement with. I think that is stating fairly what he said.

Mr. CROTHERS: I said, 'More determined to stand by the position they had taken.'

Mr. CARROLL: I presume that a great majority of the miners who worked those mines in 1912-13 were the same people or