

certainly it is a matter of keen regret to the labour men across Canada that the Speech contains no intimation whatever that the government is proposing at the present session to carry out its pledges made to labour. I hold in my hand a copy of a pamphlet entitled *Liberals and Labour*. A pre-election appeal to labour issued by the Liberal committee in October, 1921, at the very forefront of which stands the name of Hon. W. L. Mackenzie King, Liberal leader. This document begins by criticising the Conservatives for their action, or rather inaction, with regard to labour affairs.

The Conservative government failed to act. It was all a case of promise and pretence used only to fool the labour vote on the eve of elections.

I wonder whether this document can be said to differ very largely from those issued by the Conservatives, and I consider that it ought to be known to the labour people across Canada from coast to coast that the actual record of the Liberal government during the past three years has been almost barren of any enactment that is in the interest of the group commonly known as labour. The Liberals advocated at that time, the placing of the implements of production and food on the free list. I waited for three years for something along that line, and then last year introduced an amendment to the budget—but without any very noticeable results. In addition to the tariff policy referred to this document goes on—

Resolved that the committee recommends that the National Liberal Convention accept in their entirety, as a part of the Liberal platform in the spirit they have been framed, and in so far as the special circumstances of the country will permit, the terms of the Labour Convention and general principles associated with the League of Nations and incorporated in the conditions of peace.

Now, let me remind the House that these general principles incorporated into the treaty at the Peace Conference of Versailles are just as vitally a part of that treaty as were any of the international boundaries drawn up at that time, and labour had a right to expect their fulfilment. And further, we have here the promise that the Liberal party would carry out these provisions to the utmost of their ability. I propose to read these clauses with very brief comments, asking what the government has done with regard to these reforms to which it is solemnly committed.

These methods and principles for regulating labour conditions so set forth in the treaty are as follows:

First, The guiding principle that labour should not be regarded merely as a commodity or article of commerce.

I should like to ask the government to point out any specific cases in which they have

regarded labour, or enacted legislation providing that labour should not be regarded, as anything else than a commodity. I fail to see any application of that principle in the immigration policy or in the provision for unemployment for example to which we have already referred.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: What would the hon. gentleman say with regard to the appointment of the president of the Trades and Labour Congress to the Board of the Canadian National Railways?

Mr. WOODSWORTH: I quite intended to recognize that the government had carried out that provision, but I fail to see how he connects the appointment of the president of the Trades and Labour Congress to the Board of the Canadian National Railways with this principle that labour is not to be regarded as a commodity. I am quite open to any suggestion along that line, but I cannot quite see how this action is an application of the principle.

Second. The right of association for all lawful purposes by the employed as well as by the employers.

The only opportunity that we have had of testing the government on that was a resolution I brought forward two years ago, asking that bank clerks be given a right to organize, which resolution was voted down by the government.

Third. The payment to the employed of a wage adequate to maintain a reasonable standard of life as this is understood in their time and country.

It is pointed out here repeatedly that the average wage paid to the employees in this country is far below the average minimum set by the official government standard. Furthermore, many of the government employees are receiving far less than the standard which the government itself sets up as being the minimum for a decent standard of living. As I think I pointed out when the estimates were before the House dealing with civil service employees, there were postal workers, in the city of Winnipeg, employees of this government, receiving a smaller amount than was being paid in doles to those in receipt of charity from the city.

Fourth. The adoption of an eight-hour day or a forty-eight hour week as the standard to be aimed at where it has not already been attained.

The government has sought to escape responsibility for this by saying that this was not within the province of the Dominion government; but last year when they were pressed on this matter by an amendment which I introduced, the Minister of Labour said that it would not be possible to put into practice this principle of an eight-hour day