

ize the negotiation mechanisms so that Parliament will no longer find itself in a situation like this one.

The minister has been referring to some kind of bidding and said: The Progressive Conservatives want this figure, the NDP want a different one and the Social Credit Party still a third one. Mr. Chairman, we are not trying to outdo others here. It is our duty as members to do what bargaining, mediation and arbitration should have done, and if those processes have failed, Mr. Chairman, it is for the Minister of Labour to improve them rather than to blame members who really want to discharge their duties.

Mr. Chairman, that is why our party intends to propose an amendment later through one of my colleagues. That amendment will not be intended to do one better than others. It will be moved consistent with the philosophy of the Social Credit according to which each Canadian citizen has a right to be reasonably well off and it is the primary duty of the government to ensure an honest living to Canadians whether or not employed. And it is not because 56,000 workers in Canada have decided to improve their lot that we will behave like sheep, that we will approve the government and tell them to return to work without doing them justice. Our primary duty is to do justice to those workers without forgetting all the while that justice should extend to the whole country.

[English]

Mr. Rose: Mr. Chairman, I am sorry that the Minister of Labour is not in the House at the moment. Perhaps he is calming his frazzled nerves behind the curtain. Perhaps he needs to, because he has been through a very difficult period.

I should like to remind the minister that when he castigates members of this House for becoming part of the auction system and part of the bidding system, he himself started the bidding. One of the difficulties with his bid is that it is the low bid. In my view it is the kind of bid that will be unacceptable to most of the people who are concerned in this labour dispute.

The men may go back to work—some of the men may go back to work and some may not. My riding is affected by the strike in negative ways as there is a poultry industry, a dairy industry and a cattle industry there, and the feed situation is difficult at this time. I am not going to go into details because nobody is in the mood to listen tonight anyway.

We seem to be locked into a fixed position, but the amendment put forward by the Official Opposition may very well be passed. I certainly intend to support it. I am only sorry that I have to support it if our amendment fails. I regret that the Leader of the Opposition, by being "responsible", has seen fit to grant these men nothing to catch up after 25 years of being behind.

● (2250)

These men were once kings of the road. They were number one in the industrial world all across Canada. Because they have been put into this position they are now twenty-seventh or twenty-eighth. Why? They are in that position because they do not have access to what is guaranteed to other workers—free collective bargaining.

Railway Operations Act

What are we doing? We are legislating them back to work under a system of compulsory arbitration, for the good of the country. We know they must go back to work. However, what kind of a situation are we placing ourselves in if we, as responsible legislators, legislate 56,000 or even 156,000 bitter, resentful men who are trapped in their jobs, many of which are lousy, back to work because they are essential?

The patience of these men is exhausted. If the Minister of Labour does not know that by now, he has no sensitivity about the feelings of these men and the dynamics of the situation, certainly in my part of the country. Some people have talked about 38 cents. We are part of the auction. Give them the world. Give them a buck. Give them anything because you support organized labour. However, that is not the case. A CNR switchman with a wife and two children in my riding, working full time, would be better off on welfare. That is the situation. What has a man like that got to lose by not going back to work? He has a lousy job, lousy working conditions, a lousy pension and no security. Are you going to appeal rationally and reasonably to people who are being pushed around like this?

I want the strike to be settled. I want it settled with the minimum of fuss. I want reasonable justice for these men. To try and avoid fuss would be wasting everybody's time. If you avoid a fuss, there will be real trouble. It is not just wages. These men are being subjected to kangaroo courts. They do not have any grievance procedure. They have company spooks with them on the job.

I humbly submit to the Minister of Labour that we are in trouble. A very serious situation is brewing in the railroad industry all across Canada. No one can be blind to that. The minister has sent people out there to look into the situation. The minister was powerless before, and tonight he is again powerless.

I do not advocate disobeying the law. However, I am not going to vote for any resolution, motion or bill that will send these men back into the situation they have been in for the past generation. The former minister of labour, the hon. member for Verdun, says there will be more flexibility. This means that if you are earning 30 cents you might be able to go up to 37 or 38 cents. However, if you are at 38 cents, there is no flexibility. Are all these people going to be driving Cadillacs next week if they get 38 cents? That is nonsense, and everyone knows it.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rose: This session an opposition member is chairman of the transport committee. Do members know what has been brought before the committee so far this year? Nothing! This country is crippled because of transportation problems, but nothing has been referred to that committee. Why not? Because the chairman is an opposition member. Because someone had the temerity to move that he be chairman, the committee did not get anything to consider. The committee did not get the CNR financing bill. How is the CNR being financed? Every year the CNR financing bill, which involves \$500 million or \$600 million, is trotted out. We have not seen it this year. Where is the CNR annual report? We cannot have it. The committee wanted to travel throughout western Canada to look at