

I suggested this afternoon that in view of the legislative jurisdiction of the provinces, a conference should be called at once. It could be called. I am sure the provincial governments are aware of the serious situation and of the need of joint action. Unless action is taken we will face over and over again, in increasing measure, the serious consequences which in the past few months have made Canada a country of continuing strikes. There is not a word about this from over there; we just have generalities. We want to know what you are going to do.

Are new arrangements to be made in regard to labour relations? If so, let us act. Could there not be set up by parliament a labour law commission to recommend and have as a responsibility the task of updating and revising labour laws by agreement? On June 13 I suggested that the government set up a commission to review in detail the general position created in employer-employee relations by reason of technological change which I described as a matter of prime importance in connection with the various disputes which are arising. The Prime Minister answered, as reported at page 6299 of *Hansard*:

The matter mentioned by my right hon. friend is, of course, one of very great and continuing significance, as we have learned—if we needed to learn—from the dispute that we have been discussing. It may well be, Mr. Speaker, that if the house requires an opportunity to discuss this particular dispute, this will be one of the elements that we will be discussing. I quite agree that it should be considered in its wider context. I think it would be the feeling of the house that the government would give consideration to an examination of the kind suggested by my right hon. friend.

What about the MacPherson royal commission recommendations? They had not been thought of as a possibility until the last few days, according to the Minister of Labour.

The general railway bill, I am glad to hear, will be placed before a committee of the house; for some of these provisions, if carried into effect, would bring about continuing discrimination for all time to come against the western and maritime provinces.

An hon. Member: It is not the maritime provinces at all.

Mr. Diefenbaker: You are not going to settle strike difficulties, and their basic causes, by toughness. You must be fair and reasonable. That is principle number two. Is a 6 per cent increase fair and reasonable?

Legislation Respecting Railway Matters

Mr. Pickersgill: I wish the right hon. gentleman would permit me to ask him one question.

Mr. Diefenbaker: No.

Mr. Pickersgill: I did not think he would.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Diefenbaker: No. It is not because the hon. gentleman has any question which would give any difficulty; it is simply that I want to teach him decorum.

● (9:50 p.m.)

In connection with the recommendations of Mr. Justice Munroe, what does the government intend to do about the employee benefit plan? Is the government not prepared to make some allowances? At the present time the employees pay 50 per cent. Is there any reason why they should have to pay that? In connection with life insurance they receive \$1,500 in insurance. They have asked for \$2,500. The Munroe report recommended \$2,000. What is the attitude of the government? Surely some of these questions are worthy of consideration. What about holidays? The railwaymen have a maximum of three weeks holidays after 15 years of service. What is the government going to do about that? When the Minister of Transport (Mr. Pickersgill) speaks I hope he will be able to clarify these dark corners.

What about sick leave? What attitude do hon. gentlemen opposite take on this subject? These are some of the questions which deserve to be clarified and understood, because—and I say this with all the force at my command—when you secure from parliament the power to say to a person “you must work”, fairness demands that consideration be shown to the person so directed.

I should like to see a federal labour fact finding commission to be made up of qualified, experienced persons from within the ranks of labour, management and government—which would have the function of providing the basic information upon which negotiations could proceed. This board would be permanently constituted and would produce facts and figures dealing with the relationship between any given industry and the general economy. Such a board, if it had been set up prior to the start of these negotiations would have provided both employer and employees with analyses and reports related to the agreements, without in any way limiting the field of bargaining; it would lay down