

Labour Conditions

a union which will expect to get its share of the profits? There were unprecedented profits, disastrous profits. In one year they paid back 20 per cent in dividends on the equity of the shareholders. That isn't bad. If you can get back 20 cents in the dollar in one year, you can't beat that even if you are in the shyster business and you are taking an unreasonable profit in usury.

I would have expected the Minister of the Environment to say that these workers have the right to get their share from the company. What we are suggesting is that even with the anti-inflation legislation, legislation which has been a total disaster and which has not brought about one favourable decision in terms of cutting prices, in the case of the worker who feels he has been aggrieved, or the employer who feels he has been aggrieved, we will not agree to fight for his right to appeal against a decision which he considers to be unjust.

It seems to me that the least the Minister of the Environment could do is to provide for the workers in the pulp and paper industry and the other workers who are affected by the anti-inflation legislation, leaving aside the judgment of whether it is good or bad, the same kind of opportunity that I and thousands of others had who were in the industrial trade unions in the 1940s. Some of that money came out of our own pockets. I am not asking the minister to do that; I am only asking him to remember the days when he was in the trade union movement and was fighting against insurmountable odds, and the companies in most cases have been facing insurmountable odds. In this case the odds are not only management; they are also government and the full power of the law.

I have spent some time on the picket lines. I can remember spending 8½ months on the picket line in Timmins years ago. The hon. member for Timmins (Mr. Roy) asks why we do not run in the riding. I ran in that riding at one time, long before he was on the political scene, and lost by only 500 votes. It is not unreasonable to think it would be possible to go back there, because already I represent part of the city of Timmins. I had the opportunity, together with my colleague, the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie (Mr. Symes) to go into Smooth Rock Falls and Kapuskasing. We talked to the workers and their wives. What they said to us was what I knew to be true after months and months of having to go through exactly the same situation. However, their situation is much tougher. It is tougher because the workers in that industry decided to get out of the international organizations and to build for themselves a Canadian union. They have no strike fund and no moneys put away, yet they have the same vitality, and the same willingness is found among the women to back their husbands in the strike.

There is great enthusiasm among civic officials in these areas to see that the workers get a fair shake. When they organize under provincial legislation they are faced with a cartel by the companies and by the government which passes legislation affecting them, taking away their rights. It is interesting that they were offered in one or two of these cases, particularly in Abitibi, 25 per cent before they went on strike, but they did not think that was reasonable in light of the profits that the company was reaping. Every one of the hypocrites who spoke in the House about free enterprise would have to agree that if you believe in the

free enterprise system, you must agree that the labour movement is also entitled to its share of the free enterprise system.

These people on strike in the pulp and paper industry were faced with, not 25 per cent which they were voluntarily offered by the company, but with 10 per cent because the company said they should be more patriotic than the government itself, and instead of offering the maximum 14 per cent which was referred to in the Irving case they kept it down to 10 per cent. I understand they are voting today and maybe the decision has already been reached on a 14 per cent settlement. That is the increase with which they will go back to work.

How would you like, Madam Speaker, to be one of the strikers who goes back to work, after six months on the picket line, with 14 per cent? You would be doing that, not because the company made you do it but because the government made you do it. All the housewives in the area told us about the increase in the cost of living, and municipal officials told us about the increase in the cost of living and that no taxes were coming in because no one was working in the area—but the costs were going up just the same. What is the answer? I have heard some of the Liberals say that two years from now they can vote if they want. That is little comfort to those who will have to go back to work now. The country will pay dearly for it because there will be no surpluses in the pulp and paper industry. They are not stupid; they will not work seven days a week, or overtime any more and there will not be any inventory.

● (2330)

We are not going to have any exports like we have had in the last few years. The Canadian public will pay dearly for this because the workers are not getting justice. They waited for a decision on the Irving matter. There was no administrator. They had to wait for an administrator. As yet there is no appeal board. We appointed a bunch of temporary people from the civil service. Perhaps there is nothing wrong with them, but the legislation has been drafted. They already received a big increase.

The board members are not really going to be very sympathetic. They will not recognize that workers in the mills will want to be paid a similar amount, in a historical sense, as bush workers in the area. The bush workers are making \$1.50 more than the mill workers. For years and years the mill workers were the highest paid people in that area—certainly the bush workers were not—so I think there is an historical obligation for the mill workers to maintain parity with the bush workers.

The Americans have increased the price of paper another \$25, and that does not seem like very much. It may be that Canadian companies will not ask to increase the price of paper, but it is interesting to note that in the two years between 1973 and 1975 they have been allowed an increase in the price per ton of newsprint of 52 per cent and an increase in bleach craft pulp of 118 per cent. They may not ask for the \$25 right away. They really will not need it, but I suggest they would be awfully stupid to deal on the American market, where most of our surplus goes, if they do not get at least the same price that American companies have to pay for American newsprint. So they are going to