

tember, 1947. By their action and inaction the companies have also broken the admirable, long established, and beneficial practice by which Canadian employees and employers sit down together around a table in an attempt to settle their difficulties.

Surely there never was a greater condemnation of a company than you have here by two responsible commissioners appointed by the government. Yet the Minister of Labour, when the unco-operative attitude of the employers is drawn to his attention, brushes it aside, because he happened to be heckled at a meeting, and will not have anything to do with it.

If there is anything more disgraceful than the action of the companies it is the action of the Minister of Labour. I am not quite through with what this report has to say. I quote:

Your commissioners also have reason to believe that the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada would be willing to adopt the somewhat unusual procedure of entering into an agreement with the companies on behalf of this union, which is chartered to the trades and labour congress, it being understood of course, that if the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada did so sign an agreement on their behalf the union's bargaining rights would be specifically preserved.

While the companies admit that they have signed an agreement with a rival union—

This is the rival union, a union that has no standing whatsoever according to the labour legislation of Canada.

—no copy of such an agreement has been filed with the department, and no bargaining rights have been granted by the national labour relations board to any organization other than the Canadian seamen's union.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order. I notice that the Minister of Labour (Mr. Mitchell) is not in the house. The hon. member for Vancouver East (Mr. MacInnis) a minute ago used the word "disgraceful." I would refer him to Beauchesne, second edition—

MR. MACINNIS: Mr. Speaker, might I intervene? If you object, I withdraw the word.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I felt that I should intervene because the minister is not here.

MR. MACINNIS: I agree, Mr. Speaker. I was pointing out that the Canadian seamen's union is the bargaining agency according to the laws of the Dominion of Canada as administered by the Department of Labour.

The report goes on:

In view of the intransigent attitude of the companies, your commissioners have not considered that any further legal procedure on their

part would serve any useful purpose. We are unanimous in stating our belief that the defiance of the existing law, the breach of the existing agreement, and the failure to fulfil the promise made by these companies to the government are a serious threat to the recognized practice of labour conciliation, and are moreover, the worst possible weapons any employer could use in a dispute with the legally constituted bargaining representatives of his employees.

We in this country are opposed to communism. I cannot conceive of anything that is more likely to breed communists than the attitude of these employers. I will finish this report with one other paragraph:

We have reason to believe also that this conduct which goes to the root of labour relations in this country, raises far wider issues than the isolated dispute with the Canadian seamen's union and that there is grave danger that the discord will not be restricted merely to relations between this union and these companies.

That is the seriousness of this situation. If hon. members would take the trouble to read the report made by the national war labour board in 1943 they would find there the opinion of Hon. C. P. McTague, chairman of the board, and Leon Lalande who signed the majority report. I should like to read just one paragraph from the finding of that labour inquiry:

The most serious question involved at the present time is that of the right of collective bargaining. It must be kept in mind that this is a right which in a practical way has been recognized in Canada for a period of half a century. By far the majority of employers have resisted it over the period.

That is, over the fifty years. To continue:

Generally speaking, the great mass of employers, until comparatively recent years have employed all weapons in their power to resist and discourage the trade union movement. There have been exceptions, of course.

When it is remembered, however, that the international trade unions represent but approximately 20 per cent of Canadian labour generally it is apparent on a comparison with other countries such as England, Sweden and Australia that Canada's trade union movement has been very, very slow indeed. Until comparatively recent years we have been in the main an agricultural country. That factor, together with resistance to the movement by reactionary industrial employers, induced by the fear motive or other even more selfish motives, has served to hold in check any widespread advance in the movement of trade unionism for quite a period of years.

That constitutes the findings of two capable men after an exhaustive inquiry. I do not intend to take the time to read it all. Hon. members who want to read it will see what those men found that certain employer attitude develops a certain kind of labour leader. The war being over, we are now getting back