

*Labour Relations*

do the cleaning in the hospitals, deserve much more our consideration and, consequently, maybe a higher income.

● (1720)

We agree that those people need help to balance their income with regard to other trades or professions. But it is not in such cases that the disruptions are worse. It is always in cases when workers are well-paid and do not ask for more. Usually it is a small group that stirs up trouble and under the pretext of some social revolution, wants to separate the working class from the worker's true objectives thus taking simply advantage of an extraordinary force that was obtained through the force of circumstances. And now I would like to make mine an editorial that appeared in the December 1974 issue of *Opinion Canada*, in which is stressed a point which, in my opinion, is very true:

Trade unionism has for a long time been viewed favourably by the public due to the fact that the workers were deemed to be the scapegoat of management and of big companies that often seemed to have the support of governments and of police forces to victimize them and reduce them to a state of helplessness.

And the editor goes on to say:

It was an illusion. On the contrary, history shows that in North America, successive liberal governments, in Washington as well as in Ottawa, have not sought to victimize trade unionism, but to promote it, by legislating in order to enable it to resist the assaults of all-powerful multinational organizations.

American and Canadian laws have widely contributed to give the unions the power they now enjoy. Power and a certain degree of immunity have made major labour organizations arrogant, and the increasing number of strikes in the last few years are a major factor in alienating public sympathy from the unions. In reply to a recent Gallup poll on the confidence Canadians have these days in labour unions and large corporations, only 10 per cent answered they had great confidence in the labour unions, and only 8 per cent in large corporations. Those figures reveal less confidence as compared with preceding polls; a similar decrease was also noted in the United States in recent years.

To go back to my quotation:

People are starting to get the impression that unions strategies, which in the past proved themselves in private enterprise, are become overbearing and indefensible when aimed at public services.

It would seem that the time has now come for governments to help the unions find new bargaining and negotiating formulas for the members assigned to those services.

Mr. Speaker, how true those specific points are. There were confirmed once again a fortnight ago by a survey conducted scientifically in Montreal which proved in addition that the vast majority of the people, and what is more, the vast majority of the union workers and specifically those of the QFL, are calling the shots in the field of construction in Quebec. Ninety-five per cent of those very workers replied that they were against the methods used in labour negotiations, in other words, that they were against their union leader. Not so long ago, on May 1st at the Paul Sauvé Centre in Montreal, one Mr. Laberge, president of the QFL was unable to address a crowd made up exclusively of union workers.

● (1730)

This indicates that labourers as such as well as the Canadian people in general want these things to end. We are here it seems to help the people through legislation, through example. This is why I think the government

should never have had anything to do with these rights given to public servants.

Mr. Speaker, as my colleague from Kamouraska so well underlined, there are priorities which must be taken into account. Are we going to condone the exercise of a right when rights which are still more fundamental are at stake? No one will ever make me admit that the right to strike should be extended to firemen, for example, when the very day they did strike—and I refer to a specific incident which happened in Montreal, damage by fire ran into several million dollars. The strike of policemen is another illegal strike, in Montreal too, which resulted in disaster and crime. Terrible things happened at that time!

Mr. Speaker, I shall never tolerate that, bringing someone to hospital for emergency treatment, pickets decide whether the patient will be admitted or not. There are limits! We do not deny workers the right to unionize, to defend their interests, but we are absolutely against the social unrest that those rights could create. We do not want to do away with the right to strike, but as my colleague for Kamouraska said, we must try to adopt by legislation such effective means that the right to strike could become outdated.

Indeed, in 1975, it is completely unacceptable in our advanced society that we are still using old fashioned processes to solve a labour dispute, as it were impossible to hold meaningful negotiations. Mr. Speaker, people work backwards not even thinking about negotiations, about getting together in order that both parties, employer and employees, come to an agreement on a reasonable contract. No, they go on strike right away, no matter if it is an illegal strike! If they have to book sick to do so, no problem. That is the situation we are denouncing, because it upsets and disrupts the economy, as we know that in 1974, 9,255,120 man-days have been lost in this country. Where are we going now?

We can understand why the worker is demanding job security, that he is trying to oppose automation because we have not yet established a guaranteed minimum income plan to allow him to take advantage of the automation and not to be a victim of it. We have always stated that if machines take the place of men, the products of machines must be distributed to the workers. That is clear and those are the policies that should have been established.

However, Mr. Speaker, and I will conclude on this, what is the actual reason for all those disputes? Simply that employers and workers try to have a guaranteed income, they try to have more advantages, but it is impossible within the present system. Why? Because banks consider money as a commodity, an actual value, and this is not true because it is a relative value. They try to maintain money in great demand. And people need money as they need food products or any other product. That allows banks to increase their power and their control over the whole community. To that end, they tighten or ease credit so that prices grow faster than incomes. That is the basic issue, Mr. Speaker.

It is the basic economic problem, the real cause of labour-management conflicts. Workers and employers are fighting over an inadequate purchasing power. In such circumstances, it is impossible to find a satisfactory solu-