

umbia, which is principally concerned, is probably pretty clear in connection with the strike. Of course the minister will know better than I what that public opinion is; but I suggest to him that in this, perhaps more than in any other strike we have had in the country since V-J day, there is a great opportunity for him to give leadership to that almost completely formed public opinion, and move in and bring about a settlement of the strike very shortly. I do not care what method he uses, whether it be through a controller in some plant, through a public appeal, or some other method at his disposal. Whatever method he uses, I am sure all hon. members will support him. If the debate this afternoon has done anything to clarify public opinion, then surely it must show to those who are concerned that we here consider the public interest of much greater importance than the difference between the two contesting parties.

Mr. H. C. GREEN (Vancouver South): Mr. Speaker, this motion has to do primarily with the position in which the small fruit and tree fruit industries of British Columbia find themselves at this time. The situation is tragic. It is tragic for the men and women engaged in the industry and also for the other people in British Columbia. It is tragic, indirectly, for people throughout Canada and for those in other nations of the world where there is a great shortage of food.

The hon. member for Fraser Valley (Mr. Cruickshank) was right in bringing the matter before the house this afternoon. I am afraid, however, that it is only one part of the difficulty, because the tragedy goes much deeper. Lumber happens to be the chief product of British Columbia, and with the lumber industry tied up as it is to-day in that province, every activity in the province is affected. This tie-up also affects directly the prairie provinces and eastern Canada and those overseas markets to which we ship a large percentage of our lumber production.

I suggest that this afternoon the Minister of Labour (Mr. Mitchell) should make a full and frank statement of his views on the whole situation. He has been in touch with it from the start. He arranged to have Chief Justice Sloan act as mediator. I believe that there was nothing official about the appointment, but that it was made only in an attempt to get the two parties together. The chief justice of our province is a young man. He was born there and knows the lumber industry from top to bottom. Only recently he concluded a thorough survey of the industry, as the sole

commissioner, appointed under a royal commission, and he brought in an excellent report. I do not think anyone from that province would question his standing.

Mr. MACKENZIE: Hear, hear.

Mr. REID: Hear, hear.

Mr. GREEN: On Monday of this week the chief justice brought in his recommendations as to the way in which this strike should be settled. He recommended:

1. A wage increase of 15 cents an hour "across the board."
2. An average working week of 44 hours in the logging industry, in the following manner: 48 hours in the months of April, May, June, July, August and September, with time-and-a-half pay above 44 hours, and a 40-hour week during the other months of the year. A straight 44-hour week in sawmills.
3. A voluntary revokable check-off for union dues.

It is understood, of course, that between April and September it is possible to work longer hours in the woods than during the winter months.

The premier of British Columbia issued a statement at once suggesting that both parties accept these findings. A joint statement was issued by Premier Hart and Labour Minister George Pearson, in which they said this, among other things:

With the national housing emergency still prevailing, with a food shortage in Europe aggravated by the potential slowing up of shipments of food stuffs and with the general disruptions of the economy of Canada and B.C. in particular, as a result of this strike, we appeal to lumber operators and workers alike to come to a common accord and resume their labours in conformity with the recommendations laid by the chief justice.

We feel that Mr. Justice Sloan has given a most careful and thorough study of these problems.

Then the Minister of Labour (Mr. Mitchell) made a statement in reply to the hon. member for Nanaimo (Mr. Pearkes), as reported at page 2154 of *Hansard* for June 4. Dealing with the report of the chief justice the minister said:

I hope that both sides will have the good sense to accept what I call a very fair report. It is not often that I use an expression of that kind in the House of Commons. I always endeavour to walk down the middle of the road.

Mr. Coldwell: To sit on the fence.

Mr. Mitchell: Well, that is all right. I believe it is sensible, it is fair, and it is sound.

I do not know whether the minister meant that sitting on the fence was fair, sensible and sound, or that the report of the chief justice could be described in that way.