

received from Saskatchewan a letter from a man who apparently is of Ukrainian or Polish extraction. He cannot write very good English, but I think his English can be understood. He says:

Dear Sir:

On February 28, 1935, I read in the Western Producer paper, you were referring about a boy who fell from a freight train in the west and begged his rescuers to kill him because he was no good to anyone;

Would ask you kindly to let me know if you know where and when that sad accident happen; why I am asking you our boy went west about a year ago to B.C. and since last June we only had one letter from him, since we don't know where abouts he is; with this capitalistic unemployment system he took the hard road to find a living, went farther west last June and we didn't hear from him since he got to B.C.

You know how parents heart broken feel about it; will you kindly write us a few words.

I was very glad to be able to tell the father that the boy to whom I had referred was not his boy. But there are two thousand such boys now in one group at Regina and tens of thousands more in the camps; and the important point is that the government program, and this particular bill which forms the major part of it, is doing nothing whatever to solve these great problems. The bad practices referred to in the price spreads committee have grown up under the existing system and under existing legislation, which I submit the bill does very little to alter. I suppose we shall have to vote for the bill; it is good as far as it goes. But it is no great help to have the administration of the Combines Investigation Act transferred to a commission; it does not solve our problem. What did the Prime Minister say a few months ago in those radio speeches which excited the interest of us all and made us almost hope that something might be done?

The old system served you well but it ended in a nuisance. Is that so or not? It ended in a condition under which there has been universal depression and unemployment and poverty in the midst of plenty.

Is there anything in this bill before us, is there anything in the whole program of legislation which the Prime Minister has so rigorously defended that will do anything really to meet that situation? Again, he gave utterance in the last of those radio addresses to this statement which I think fairly summarizes the report of the price spreads commission:

Many faults and injustices in the capitalist system—child labour, sweat shops, slave wages, crushingly long hours, inequality of benefits, low prices to primary producers, high prices to the ultimate consumer.

[Mr. Woodsworth.]

One would have imagined, after the situation had been so carefully diagnosed, that we might well have expected some sort of remedy. And yet this is the kind of thing we find in the bill, section 20:

Unfair Trade Practices

20. The commission shall receive complaints respecting unfair trade practices and may investigate the same and, either before or after an investigation, if of opinion that the alleged practice constitutes an offence against a law prohibiting unfair trade practices, shall communicate the same to the attorney-general of Canada and to the director of public prosecutions or to the attorney-general of the province within which the offence is alleged to have been committed.

Does anyone think that that kind of measure solves the problem, that it comes anywhere within reach of the great outstanding evils which were outlined by the Prime Minister?

Child labour. We all know that there are infringements of the laws against child labour, but supposing this commission does investigate and refer cases to the attorney general of Quebec, does anyone think we shall get any action? None whatever. So here we sit, the dominion parliament, powerless in the face of a terrific abuse.

An hon. MEMBER: Oh, oh.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: Someone can scoff. It is easy to do that, but I submit that to scoff ill becomes the supporter of a government pledged to reform, when we are asking that government to implement the promises made so lavishly to the people, the promises in fact on which it was elected to office.

Sweatshops. Is there anything in this bill that is likely to be really effective in preventing sweatshops, preventing people being ground down in such a way as reminds us vividly of that poem of Thomas Hood of so many years ago? In England they have corrected some of the abuses associated with the sweatshops, but these abuses are about as bad in many communities of this country as they ever were in England.

Slave wages. With wages of something like \$2 a week, is there anything in this bill that is going to help much? Even if we have a minimum wage law brought in we are told that without some supplementary legislation the last state is worse than the first.

Crushingly long hours. Again we have a bill that tends to help in certain instances, but which allows such exceptions that the legislation as a whole will not prove really effective.

Inequality of benefits. Can anyone think of the unequal distribution of the wealth of