

Seamen's Strike

because the company completely ignored him. Then a commission was appointed, consisting of J. D. McNish and Leonard W. Brockington. Mr. Brockington is a particularly outstanding conciliator who has been used by the Department of Labour on various occasions. Indeed, when the standing parliamentary committee on industrial relations wanted someone to conciliate the steel strike in 1946, Mr. Brockington was asked to do it. I have the report submitted by the commissioners to the Minister of Labour and dated April 15, 1948. I shall read from it as briefly as I can. I quote:

The conciliation board has sent a number of notices advising the parties of meetings in Toronto on the 22nd of March and on the 30th of March.

Therefore you see, Mr. Speaker, this is a long-standing dispute. I continue:

Although representatives of the employees attended the meetings so arranged, the board's invitation to the employers received neither the courtesy of an acknowledgment nor the co-operation of an attendance.

In order to try to get over the objection of the owners to the officials of the union because of their alleged communist affiliation, the commissioners urged the officers of the union to allow other parties to negotiate the agreement and become responsible for the signing and the carrying out of the agreement. The union officials agreed, but, as can well be understood, with misgivings, because they wanted an agreement.

The following special negotiating committee was appointed: Percy R. Bengough, president of the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada; William Jenovese, vice-president of the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada, and president of the Toronto district trades and labour council; John W. Buckley, secretary of the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada.

The companies were then advised that these well known labour leaders were willing to negotiate any agreement on behalf of the seamen's union. Mr. Bengough, it was found later on, could not attend, and Mr. Russell Harvey, who, I believe, is a member of the typographical union, or some union associated with the typographical union in Toronto, took his place. The commissioners say:

Your commissioners called a meeting of the interested parties in Toronto on Monday, April 12. It was attended by representatives of the seamen's union and by Mr. Frank Wilkinson, K.C., and one of his legal associates on behalf of the companies. The companies' representatives were without instructions. At the request of the board they communicated with their clients. The chairman of the board was advised by Mr. Wilkinson that the attitude of the companies towards your commissioners was the same as their attitude towards the conciliation board.

[Mr. MacInnis.]

That is, they ignored the commissioners in the same way as they ignored the conciliation board. The report then goes on:

In the year 1947 a number of disputes arose between these companies and the union.

That is, between the shipping companies.

A board of arbitration was set up in accordance with the provisions of the agreement of 1946. The award of the board was not accepted by the companies after the companies had failed to appoint an arbitrator in accordance with their agreement.

Then further on:

After the government's intervention, and as a part of the settlement publicly announced, the companies made a promise that if a vote were taken amongst their employees and found to be favourable to the Canadian seamen's union the companies would negotiate an agreement for the year 1948.

Then steps were taken to take a vote, as required by the labour laws of Canada. This is the result of the vote. The ballot read:

Do you desire the Canadian seamen's union to act as your representative for the purpose of negotiating a collective agreement with your employer for the 1948 navigation season?

This is the result of the vote for the employees of the two companies, the Sarnia Steamship company first, and Colonial Steamships second:

	Sarnia Steam- ships	Colonial Steam- ships
Number of eligible voters..	170	178
Number of votes cast	159	169
Number of voting "yes"	143	154
Number of voting "no"	9	13
Number of spoiled ballots ..	7	2

It will appear from this that the Canadian seamen's union was accepted by the employees on a government-supervised vote, on the part of the Sarnia Steamship company, of 143 for and 9 against, and on the part of the Colonial Steamship company, of 154 for and 13 against.

Surely a vote of that kind is sufficient indication of what the employees wanted. After that, the companies, which had promised that if the vote were taken and if it favoured the seamen's union they would accept it, as soon as the vote was taken refused to accept it. This is what the commissioners have to say in that regard:

It is apparent that the companies have ignored the meetings of the conciliation board appointed this year and have declined either to meet their men or to attempt conciliation and negotiate by using the services of the former board or of the present commissioners. Such conduct is an open breach of their agreement with the union dated September, 1946,—

Note this:

—of the provisions of P.C. 1003, and of their undertaking made with the government of Sep-