

our pulp mill, each job required an investment of \$122,000.

These, then, are some of the more important developments that have created the vast imbalance in power that lies at the very heart of our collective bargaining system which, as I have indicated, is functioning rather badly.

There are additional reasons why the system is breaking down. There is ample evidence to indicate that confidence, direction and guidance within several union structures, and within organized labour generally, have collapsed to the point where management frequently does not know with whom it should really bargain. This breakdown persists even to the level of the union local where, when an agreement is made at the bargaining table, it is turned down by the union membership about 15 per cent of the time. Thus far in 1970, the Noranda Group has already had five rejections of bargaining settlements—and two of these resulted in strikes at major operations. Isn't it probable that many union members see their union as a huge bureaucratic institution in the same way that they view big business and big government?

Frank assessments

It would be statesmanlike for leaders of the Canadian Labour Congress to confess that they wouldn't agree to a program of voluntary wage restraint because the CLC wouldn't be able to get individual unions to go along; which, in turn, wouldn't be able to get their union locals to go along; which wouldn't agree to sell the idea to the membership. Such a frank admission would at least have the virtue of focussing attention on a real problem, thus permitting appropriate solutions to be explored. At the moment, all we hear from labour leaders is rhetoric that large wage increases (currently running at an annual rate in excess of 9 per cent) are not a major factor in the inflation we suffer. From one American union leader we even had the arrogant pronouncement that his union would be more responsive to the pleas of the Canadian Prime Minister for restraint, than it would be to those of President Nixon.

This was Walter Reuther, late President of the United Automobile Workers. On Reuther's recent death, Chrysler's Vice-Chairman said: "It has

taken a strong man to keep this situation under control. I hope that whoever his successor may be, he can exercise equal internal discipline." Doubtless his point is well taken; but it is shocking to realize that an apparent ability to keep the lid on revolt in the union membership is the overriding criterion for union leadership.

Membership rejection of negotiated settlements creates serious problems for unions, management and governments alike. It is one of my sad disappointments that no government has seen fit as yet to initiate tripartite efforts to solve this vexing and common problem.

Public Service strikes

Another development that has mitigated against proper functioning of the bargaining process in the private sector has been the granting of the strike privilege in the federal Public Service and in some provinces. Government is the embodiment of all the people. It cannot move away, it cannot lock out its employees, and it is not a business organized for profit. Thus, the conventional notion of strike as a test of economic strength does not apply. A strike against government becomes an interference with the political process; it is an effort by one section of the public to misuse monopolistic control of a specific service—the postal service is a good example—as a weapon with which to bring the entire community into submission.

The unions say of the Government, "Let's squeeze as much as we can from the lemon." In Mr. Trudeau's words, "The juice doesn't come from my pocket but from the public." U.S. Labor Secretary George Shultz has said, "A person who chooses to work for the Government accepts a special responsibility to the national interest..... striking against the Government—and against the public order the Government is constituted to uphold—is not a right; it is a wrong."

Time and again, it has been demonstrated that a politician is in no position to handle crisis bargaining that may end up in a strike that will play havoc with essential tax-supported public services.

All strikes in the Public Service should be prohibited, and the sooner, the better. Such a prohibition would clearly be in the public interest,