

Industrial Relations Act

his part of a realization that the Freedman report and its implications go beyond the limited scope of railways and railway negotiations. The time must come when the Freedman report is extended to the complete field of labour-management relations, not only relations between the railways and their unions but relations between all companies and their employees.

There is, of course, implied in the Freedman report, and properly so, a sense of responsibility which must lie with labour. There are times when labour must realize the fact that in many instances technological changes render a particular source of employment in a small community no longer capable of competing with other firms and businesses willing to change and to do things in a more modern manner.

There must be placed at the disposal of management and labour certain steps. I hope, if I may indulge in some idealistic thinking, that all the changes in the future which will protect labour, prevent disruption and protect small communities can be arrived at by the simple expedient of sitting down and showing some good will and co-operative planning. Unfortunately this has not been the experience of the past between management and labour, and in this type of atmosphere somebody suffers, in most cases labour.

That is why I think the Freedman report should be required reading on the part of everybody interested in the future of this nation. I am particularly referring to the fact that if Canada is to survive and maintain its present standard of living it must compete more and more for the markets of the world. More and more as we compete the natural aims and ambitions of labour and management become the same. The day has passed when labour and management can make unilateral decisions, because in effect their destiny is one and the same.

I think the government realizes the importance of the Freedman report. I think that its implications and its impact upon labour relationships and industrial disputes are self-apparent. I think the minister and his department are prepared to give and are at this very moment giving full study to this report so that in the very near future they can bring before the house recommendations along the lines envisaged by Judge Freedman.

Perhaps the Freedman report treats of more than just the rights of labour and management. It treats of the rights of the

[Mr. Mackasey.]

third element in the community—the storekeepers, the shopkeepers and the little businessmen who live in a community which is so dependent on one or two industries or, in the case of the run-through, on the railways exclusively. These people too have rights.

I think that the thinking of all enlightened people today indicates that management and labour do have a common destiny, that they must not go their merry way alone. It is imperative that labour understands that today management is not something designed strictly to take complete, cold and callous advantage of labour. On the other hand, I think that management must understand that the labour force is a partner which is needed very badly, that good will and harmony is to the mutual advantage of both and that strikes and lockouts benefit nobody, least of all the Canadian people.

Mr. Alkenbrack: May I ask the hon. member for Verdun (Mr. Mackasey) a question? I followed his remarks with considerable agreement and with great interest, but in his comments about small industry and small communities, particularly the small towns of Canada, was he predicting the demise of small industry? I ask that question having in mind particularly the tariff policy which this government is contemplating.

Mr. Mackasey: On the contrary, Mr. Speaker, I am also presuming that an industry in a small community which hires 35 people and turns out a product it is finding harder and harder to sell owing to the activities of a similar industry situated 100 or even 50 miles away in another community, an industry which has seen fit to start from scratch with new methods of production and with a new approach to the problem, will have no choice but to modernize itself, perhaps at the expense of reducing its staff from 35 to 12 or 15 employees. This it must do if it wants to stay in business, and it is one of the vexing problems facing small industry.

What does an industry do in this case? Does it try to go along with 35 employees and produce something it cannot sell in a competitive market? Or does it face reality and modernize its shop even if it means reducing its staff from 35 to 12? At least these 12 people would have a future. It is at this time that the fate of the 23 people left out has to be considered, long before the changeover is made to modern methods.

Consideration must be given to the impact of this step on the lives of these 23 families