

*Proposed Committee on Unemployment*

Quite often the union leaders are most undemocratic. They do not consult the members of their unions about the course to be followed. They impose their own views upon the men and the men have to suffer because of the decisions made by a small number of men who receive large salaries and who try to exploit human credulity to its limit.

This occurred recently in Noranda, in Quebec, which offers a typical case. In August last year a strike was decided upon. I am told from a reliable source that the company was ready to deal with the men, but it was a question of check-off. The company did not want to hear any suggestions with regard to the check-off and then a strike was decided upon. It was impossible according to the labour regulations to make an offer to the men at the time, but the men knew that the company was well disposed toward them and it would have been easy for them to get what they wanted.

The union insisted on calling a strike in August. A citizens' committee was formed and it met with representatives of the company. During the week end we heard with great satisfaction that the strike had been settled and the men were to resume their work. But what happened in the meantime? The men who belonged to the union have had to spend the money they had saved over several years in order to live. They did not suffer from hunger because they had received fair wages, but they had to take from the bank the money that they used to receive in the form of cheques. It will now take them many years to build up their savings to where they were when the strike was decided upon by the union leaders.

The men gained nothing. The increase they have obtained could have been obtained in the summer. They were without salaries and wages for many months, for more than half a year. They had nothing except a small pittance from the union. I hope that as a lesson that small amount of money paid by the union to the men to help them exist will not be paid back. What is the result? The union leaders had to show their so-called usefulness to the men. The only thing they have done is to cause them trouble and make them suffer for many months.

They were unemployed but that was not the fault of the government. It was the fault of the union. In this case the unions were to blame. In my own town of Riviere du Loup there is a pulpmill employing 40 to 50 people. The men working there decided to ask for an increase of so much per hour but the company explained that they could not

give it to them, that they had to decrease their salaries to a small extent in order to be able to sell their product at a price that would be acceptable on the world market. The company had in prospect some fine contracts in England and in other parts of Europe, and they were awaiting the decision of the men in order to start production.

However, the union decided that the men should have more instead of less and, as a result, they have been unemployed now for a long time. The two union leaders were able to obtain jobs elsewhere and they did not suffer from the strike. They were well looked after because they had jobs elsewhere, but the other poor fellows had to live on their unemployment benefits. This is very sad and those unemployment conditions were created by union leaders and the men suffer because of them. Every other week in my home town I hear of notices of meetings of the so-called union to discuss the matter, which has been discussed for many months. The men are not working now and that is what happened. Of course, all these facts have not been mentioned in the memorandum that has been sent to the government.

There is another mill in my constituency which has been closed for the winter, and this very important mill has been closed because of the exacting propositions submitted by union leaders. There they were asking for more all the time and finally the owner said: "Well, if you ask so much for your wages, then it is impossible for me to sell my products on the markets of the world. The only thing for me to do is to close the mill for the winter." He closed it and the men have unemployment benefits.

It is a very sad situation but it was created by the union leaders, some of whom come from various parts of the country. We have some visitors from Quebec city who are talking all the time and who try to influence the men in order that they may ask for more all the time so that they may demonstrate the importance of their jobs and continue to receive the salaries they get by causing trouble.

I had to discuss the question of seniority with the leaders of the labour union, and the general chairmen of the Canadian National Railways in Moncton refused to give the men the seniority rights they were entitled to. I had to fight with them; I had to put them to shame. I had to get in touch with an important officer of the union in Montreal, and with Mr. Bengough in Ottawa and Mr. George Meany in Washington, and finally I got it. I had to put to shame the general chairmen of the union in Moncton. They