

Legislation Respecting Railway Matters

89,720 employees and last year had 66,837 employees, a decrease of over 30 per cent.

Insecurity and anxiety are prevalent throughout our society and nowhere more prevalent than among railway workers. They have seen innovations and technological changes that have wiped out many jobs. They do not know from day to day or from month to month what is going to happen to them. This came to a head nearly two years ago and as a result of some wildcat strikes the government appointed the Freedman commission.

The Freedman report was brought down last year. Nothing has been done about implementing it but now the government, which has already had a royal commission look into the matter of job security and what is to be done about the workers in the event of technological change, is asking us to refer the whole matter back to another arbitration board which will review it again. Surely members of the government who have quoted the Freedman report and the excellent recommendations it contains throughout the length and breadth of the country do not need to leave this matter to arbitration.

Surely the principles affecting the question of job security for workers, the matter of consultation in the event of technological change and the matter of adequate notice to workers of any changes which affect them, ought to be written into this bill. The workers should not have to go before another arbitration board to argue for something which they already won from the Freedman commission. This is why we support the amendment which has been moved by the Leader of the Opposition. We believe that this legislation is deficient in that it does nothing to implement the recommendations of the Freedman commission and to put those principles on the statute books of Canada.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, may I say that we hope the government will have second thoughts about this legislation. Before this bill is given second reading we hope the government will be prepared to indicate that it is willing to make some of the changes we have recommended. If it fails to do so then it must accept the responsibility if the legislation is completely ineffective in getting the men back to work and getting the trains running again.

But I want to warn the government that if this strike is settled, and I hope it will be settled soon, it should not feel that it has really grappled with the causes that produced

[Mr. Douglas.]

the strike. If this strike is brought to a successful conclusion and the men go back to work on terms which are fair and just, the government is going to have other strikes and other labour disputes unless it faces up to the fact that in this so-called affluent society the affluence is not fairly shared by all sections of the community.

The government must face the fact that we have still got unskilled workers, underpaid workers, farmers and fishermen who are getting inadequate incomes, and old age pensioners and veterans on fixed incomes who cannot survive in the face of the rising cost of living. The government must face the fact that the present distribution of income in Canada favours certain groups and that the great mass of the Canadian people are not enjoying the fruits of their collective labour.

The government will have to grapple with the problem of bringing wages, prices and profits into some proper relationship that is consonant with social justice. The time has come when we must either revamp the Canadian economy or face the prospect of having other economic crises like that which now faces the country. The railway strike will not be the end. It will only be one in a long series of crises unless we are prepared to face up to the fact that the present economy is an economic jungle in which the powerful are able to take the lion's share and the great bulk of the people have to be satisfied with what is left.

We shall have dislocations and social upheaval in Canada until we are prepared to build a society founded on economic planning and social justice. Let us not deceive ourselves that ending one strike will bring industrial peace to Canada. That will depend entirely upon substituting a planned economic and social democracy for our jungle economy.

● (5:20 p.m.)

[Translation]

Mr. Real Caouette (Villeneuve): Mr. Speaker, we have now before us two amendments to Bill C-230.

The second amendment, that is the sub-amendment which I just received, has been moved by the N.D.P.; I draw the attention of the N.D.P. leader (Mr. Douglas) who, when he comes in the province of Quebec, speaks highly of the French language, of bilingualism in Canada, to the fact that his amendment is in English and that no French copies are available. The hon. member for York