

discussion of a subject of such very grave importance—a subject so closely connected with one of the greatest problems we have before us to-day, that of the relations between capital and labour—should have degenerated into a very petty attack upon a member of the Government. Many of the assertions made by those who have spoken on the other side of the House are quite true; many of the assertions made can be justified by a careful perusal of the facts. But there has been an absolute failure on the part of the hon. gentlemen who have attacked the minister so bitterly to point out where the weakness lay in this matter of failing to secure a settlement or to point out remedies that might be introduced to overcome this difficulty. I shall reply to one or two of the statements made. The hon. member for Cape Breton (Mr. Carroll) asked: Has there been a single case where the present Minister of Labour effected a settlement in a labour dispute of this kind? I would call attention to the dispute which occurred prior to this Government taking office between the Grand Trunk and its employees which dragged along, after an award was made, for two years or thereabouts. As a matter of fact the then Minister of Railways and the then Minister of Labour (Mr. King), had frequent conferences with the Grand Trunk and utterly failed to get a settlement of that dispute. The present Minister of Labour did secure a settlement after he came into office. That alone, I think, should be placed to his credit. Another occasion I can cite is that of a strike which occurred at the Britannia mines at Howe Sound in my constituency involving about six hundred men. I drew the attention of the Minister of Labour to it and at once steps were taken to appoint a board. The men in that case acted in accordance with the Act and made an application in proper form. A board of conciliation was appointed and an award was given, but there happened at that time what will happen in almost every labour dispute we attempt to settle with the limited powers contained in the present Act, the company refused to accept the award and the Government were absolutely powerless. In the case of the Grand Trunk the minister exercised what is known as the power of the big stick; he exercised a power through another source to effect a settlement. But in the case of the Britannia mines there was no other way in which a settlement could be forced on the company or the company could be forced to accept the award.

Mr. CARROLL: Would the hon. member be favourable to an amendment to the Industrial Disputes Act imposing a penalty upon any party to the trouble not obeying or fulfilling the recommendations of a board of conciliation?

Mr. STEVENS: I shall discuss that in a moment. I may say now though that I am in favour of such an amendment. I am informed by the minister himself, and I think the notice is on the Order Paper, that he is introducing a Bill so to amend the Act as to incorporate this and many other points. I do not know that this point will be included as we understand it but if it is not I intend making reference to it on the floor of the House. He is at present drafting amendments to the Industrial Disputes Act to remedy the defects which have been found to exist. It is amusing to listen to the very generous bouquets that have been flung to the gallery. Whatever credit may be due to the gentleman who drafted the Act, there is one thing we can certainly say and that is that the Act is made absolutely useless by the absence of the point made by my hon. friend, the absence of any penalty that can be possibly applied to enforce the findings of a board of conciliation. You cannot enforce the Act under any statute of Canada.

I wish to refer briefly to the unfortunate conditions obtaining on Vancouver Island. A very unfair attack was made by the hon. member for Carleton (Mr. Carvell) on the hon. member for Nanaimo (Mr. Shepherd). I know, as a matter of fact, that the hon. member for Nanaimo was constantly in touch during the last session with the Minister of Labour in connection with this matter; not only was he in touch, but other members from British Columbia, who were appealed to by the labour men in different parts of the province, were constantly in touch with the Minister of Labour as occasion arose. The hon. member for Carleton (Mr. Carvell) is an astute, keen lawyer, and he knows that to rise in this House, prior to the outbreak of a riot, and declare that danger was in the air, that a riot was going to occur, would be the very way in which to incite a riot. My hon. friend would be the first to advise his clients in such a case to take the matter as calmly and quietly as possible.

Mr. CARVELL: Does the hon. member mean to say that I wanted the hon. member for Nanaimo to state that there was going to be a riot?