

the success of the conference. But whatever views may be expressed at the conference, an enlightened public opinion can force the delegates to change their minds. There are certain matters which have not been taken up by the conference which should be raised, and I have in mind particularly the problem of labour relations. In the proposals submitted by the government of Canada to the dominion-provincial conference on reconstruction I find this with regard to wage control and collective bargaining:

Much has been said at various times about the desirability of uniformity throughout Canada of minimum wage standards, occupational coverage, maximum hours of work and minimum age of employment, consistent with justifiable local or regional variations in cost of living standards. The dominion government is most willing to discuss any proposals which might be made in these fields.

I regret that it was put as mildly as that. It was up to the government, just as it came along with proposals regarding health and old age pensions, to come along also with proposals respecting a minimum wage and a national labour code. There is a growing sentiment throughout the country in favour of a national labour code. It was interesting to note that in the province of Quebec, which is often referred to as an isolationist province, a labour delegation a few weeks ago proposed to Premier Duplessis a national code for labour.

Mr. SMITH (Calgary West): I did not hear that. Did the hon. member say that the premier of Quebec wanted a national code?

Mr. ROSE: No. A delegation representing the C.C.L. unions in the province of Quebec met the premier of the province and proposed a national labour code.

Mr. SMITH (Calgary West): Does the hon. member think that is popular in Quebec?

Mr. ROSE: This delegation, speaking on behalf of organized labour, made that proposal to the premier.

Mr. SMITH (Calgary West): The hon. member does not really mean that?

Mr. ROSE: I sincerely do. It was the opinion of the delegation representing the members of the C.C.L. unions in the province of Quebec. I was not there myself.

I know that all sorts of arguments are generally dragged out in opposition to a national labour code. The constitutional problem is raised. I say that if it is necessary to make changes in our constitution, those changes should be made.

In this atomic age we cannot live in the horse-and-buggy days of 1867. The bogey will be raised in connection with high wages that if you have high wages there will be higher prices and the spiral will start; you know the story which is generally told. We say it is not necessary if you have higher wages to have higher prices, because there has been a great improvement in technical development in this country and also in the skill of the people who operate the machines. Further, there is plenty of surplus profits which could be used without impoverishing a single employer. The statistical summary published by the Bank of Canada reveals that profits of Canadian businesses in 1944, after allowing all deductions for taxes, were \$416 million, or nearly double what they were in 1936. The same survey states that the accumulated surplus and surplus reserves of 700 companies in 1943 amounted to \$1,188 million, compared with \$800 million in 1938. So that there is plenty of room right there for an increase in wages to give purchasing power to the people. It is not enough to give a man a job. The Minister of Reconstruction said a few months ago that there will be a million jobs. Yes, but unless they are jobs at decent wages we shall not have lasting prosperity. The less the purchasing power, the sooner a crash is bound to come. These are plain and simple facts of economics, and they demonstrate why it is necessary that the wages paid to workers should be adequate.

A word as to the problem of unemployment insurance benefits. Let me point out that \$14 or \$10 will not make it possible for workers and their families to exist. The present unemployment insurance benefits are quite insufficient. Recently there was a Gallup poll, taken among all types of the population of Canada, in which forty-three per cent agreed that it is necessary to have increased unemployment insurance. Unless a man gets a reasonable unemployment benefit he will be forced to grab a job at low wages. Of course some people do not mind that, in fact it is just up their alley, but as far as the people who have to take these jobs at low wages are concerned, that is not so and the nation as a whole suffers as the result of such a policy. That is why increased unemployment insurance benefits are needed.

I would emphasize that these are things which have to be done. Fine words will not give the people of Canada what they need. Fine words will not fulfil the promises which were made to the men who went overseas to fight and are confronted with the problem to-day of finding a decent job. Fine words