

I say, finally, that the union representatives were wrong in not acceding to the Prime Minister's request for a thirty-day postponement in order to permit negotiations to be continued.

Hon. Mr. Haig: That is the best reason of all.

Hon. Mr. Farris: No matter how you look at it, you cannot get away from this point. It is all very well to say that the government was lax in its handling of the situation. Maybe it was, for no one is perfect. But the Prime Minister of Canada, fully conscious of his responsibilities and realizing what serious consequences a strike might entail, asked the leaders to allow negotiations to continue for a further thirty days. And mark you, honourable senators, not since last May or June had there been any mandate for a strike from the men represented by these leaders. In the meantime the situation had changed. Many things might happen in a thirty-day period. I say that under all the circumstances, and with the narrowing of the field of dispute between the parties, the men who refused to comply with the request of the Prime Minister were not justified in doing so. I point out that I am not making an attack against the men for what has been done; I am making this argument in relation to what I have already laid down as the premise to the discussion. I repeat: this strike in the circumstances, and against the Canadian people, was not justified, and the fact that it was carried out by a group of men as good as these men were, necessitates consideration of protection against what may happen in the future.

Honourable senators, I notice by a news item in today's *Globe and Mail* that the running trades on the railways are now making demands on the companies. This item reads in part:

A demand for a blanket wage increase of 30 cents an hour for 35,000 running trades employees of Canada's railways will be served on the Canadian Pacific Railway in union-management negotiations opening here today.

There is no direct threat of strike accompanying the demand, but the power to strike is there. The time has come when the people of Canada must give thought to the morrow, and the proper method by which fair treatment may be received by all parties—industry, employers, employees—and above all to the public.

I come now, honourable senators, to my suggested remedies, and I wish to take a constructive look at the future. I say that the government has got to do something positive, perhaps not in this session, but in the

next session. First, while we are, as it were, hobbling along over the detour, consideration should be given to the use of a secret strike ballot, as emphasized yesterday by my honourable friend from Regina (Hon. Mr. Wood). I can speak with some authority on the matter of a secret strike ballot, because we have it in the province of British Columbia. Before the last election in that province many labour leaders made violent attacks against the government for its proposals in this respect, but the results of the election justified—if anything can be justified by election results—the wisdom of the government in its labour legislation. It was returned with a much greater majority than it previously had.

Before amplifying my argument on this point I would ask the question: Why should labour leaders oppose the use of a secret strike ballot? The only reason I have heard was that it was a reflection on the good faith and integrity of the unions. Well, honourable senators, this is not an elective house, but many of us went through elections before we came here, and we know what happens. I remember that when I was a boy in New Brunswick we had the open ballot. Perhaps I should not tell some of the things I know about that happened there. But honourable senators know well that we have provided a secret ballot in elections for the protection of the country, but primarily for the protection of the voters. Surely no one would say that it was not a protection to an honest working man to be just as free to declare his opinion on strike action as on his choice for a member of a legislature or for the Parliament of Canada.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. Farris: Not only does British Columbia use a secret ballot, as provided for under section 75 of our Industrial Disputes and Conciliation Act, but the vote is supervised by officials from the department. This system works very well. Why should it not work well? What right has any leader of labour to object to securing a fair vote on the attitude of labour.

The next thing that I think the government should do immediately, by way of putting a few more planks on the detour, is to see that the final ballot on a strike shall be on the issues at the time of the strike. In the present case the strike vote should not have been taken on the issues as of last May or June, but upon those of the latter part of August, when much better offers had been made to the men.