

to whitewash the workers; they may have made mistakes, but I will say that if they made mistakes there were other, much stronger powers much more lacking in the fundamentals of constitutionalism. I am not a constitutionalist, because I believe that generally you have to initiate things outside the regular lines of constitution. On the other hand I am not one who advocates violent revolution; I have said that before and I have been bitterly condemned for so saying.

The CHAIRMAN (Mr. Marcell): The hon. gentleman's time is up.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: As I sit down I would plead for fair play for these strikers.

Mr. VENIOT: When this item was first placed before the committee of supply it was my intention to then make the statement which I wish to now make. When I saw that there was a disposition to discuss the merits of this item I thought perhaps it would not be right to make my statement at that time. Let me say here that for over a year I have given this question serious, deep thought and study. I did not recommend to the government the insertion of this item of \$115,000 in the supplementary estimates without having given it serious consideration. I cannot agree with those who say that because we would recognize what I considered at that time to be an injustice we are recognizing at the same time the results which developed from the strike of 1919. I know nothing of the Winnipeg strike; I do not want to know anything about the merits or demerits of it. I considered the case as I found it, and since I find in reading the press lately and in the speeches made on the floor of this house that wittingly or unwittingly the case has been misrepresented in many respects, I think it only fair that I should be allowed a few moments to lay the case before the committee as I found it.

The statement that these men were taken back under certain conditions is true, but it is equally true that these conditions were never fulfilled. These men were taken back; they had to undergo a civil service examination in order to qualify, which examination entitled them to be placed in the lowest classification of the service. They should have been placed in that classification and given an opportunity under the merit system to work up to the higher classification which they occupied before the strike. That was not done. When they underwent the civil service examination and were put in the low classification, receiving the wages or salaries of the lower classification, to my mind they should

[Mr. Woodsworth.]

have been kept there. When they went back into the civil service after passing that examination they were placed in a higher classification and called upon not only to do the work of the more highly classified officials which they were before the strike, but also to instruct the new men who came into the service and to help by their efforts to make the service more efficient.

Mr. DUNNING: And at a lower salary.

Mr. VENIOT: Yes, at a lower salary, at the minimum salary. That is where I find the injustice, I am not going to criticize the Postmaster General or the government of that day at all. That is not my intention. I state this merely because I want the facts laid before the country so that there will be no longer any misrepresentation. The case of these men may not end here; it may come up again, and it is for that reason, finding as I have found arguments based upon misrepresentations of this case that I wish to place these facts now before the committee. There having been so much misrepresentation; there having been so much propaganda for and against taking the Winnipeg strikers back; that having been carried on for a certain number of years without anyone having had the opportunity or perhaps the courage to lay the facts exactly as they are before the people; knowing that there is still a very bitter feeling in this matter; that there is still a strong opposition in the house coming from sources where perhaps the case is not well understood; feeling that before I go further in the matter I should give the house a greater opportunity of investigating and examining into the case and not ask it to take this action at this late hour when we are about to prorogue; and feeling that this case will perhaps come up at some later date, I thought I should ask one of my colleagues to move that the vote be reduced by the amount provided for salaries and allowances, namely \$115,000. But I want it distinctly understood that I am not doing so on the arguments advanced in the house to-night in that regard, because many of those arguments were not founded upon fact. I do not say that there was intentional misrepresentation; I do not wish to insinuate anything of the kind, but I have the facts before me. I may also point out that I would not withdraw from the case because of a veiled threat that this house might be called upon to sit for several days yet. I will now ask my colleague to move in the matter.

Mr. ROBB: Nine years ago, in June, 1919, a regrettable incident in the city of Win-