

Industrial Relations

Wabasso Cotton Company Limited, C. R. Whitehead, was asked in regard to the company's attitude to trade unions and he said:

The men can belong to any union if they like. We do not ask a man if he belongs to a union or what his religion may be, but the board of directors refuse to recognize the union, any union.

Remember, that was only in 1937. Then here is another quotation:

I never had to deal with a union here before, never heard of such a thing, and I am not going to be led by a lot of such folk as if I might just have a rope around my neck and be led like a lamb to the slaughter.

That is Henry Johnson, president of Courtaulds (Canada) Limited. Then here is another one:

We have no objection whatever to our employees joining any kind of organization they feel so disposed to. I don't think we would be prepared to consider dealing with any organization, because we would very much prefer to deal with them as individuals, because there are always people who get in control of these things,—

And may I say that people get in control of the textile industry.

—or it seems to be the case, who have very radical ideas, imaginary ills or problems.

I could read you some of the evidence as to the wages paid in the textile industry at that time, and I assure you that the ills were anything but imaginary. The quotation I have just read was from W. P. MacDougall, general manager of Belding-Corticelli Company Limited. Then here is another quotation:

The company will not permit any third party to interfere between the management and the employees or to take away from the employees their rights as individuals to deal with the company.

That is the Dominion Textile Company Limited.

There was one exception, and that was the president of the M. E. Binz Company, Limited. He said:

We as manufacturers. . . have got the right to organize ourselves. Is it not right that labour should have the same right?

Now, I wanted to put that on the record in order to show those who feel that labour is irresponsible that if labour is irresponsible—I say again I do not concede it—it is because they have not had the opportunity to exercise the rights and duties that build responsibility. They can never do that until the opportunity is extended to them. Over a good many years we have had considerable discussion on this matter, and since the industrial relations committee has approved the principle on two occasions I suggest there is no good reason why the proposal should not now be made the law of this country.

Mr. Gregg: May I ask the hon. member a question? In view of the fact the quotations

which he read dated back about fifteen or seventeen years, would he admit that there have been a good many changes in the attitude of management towards organized labour in those intervening years.

Mr. MacInnis: I want to be quite fair. I will admit at once that there undoubtedly has been a change. The textile industry is now fairly well organized. The trade union movement has made great strides in Canada since that time. But I wish to draw to the attention of the minister the fact that the advance made by trade unions was made at a time when there was close to full employment, and when you might say the labour market was in favour of the trade unions. I am afraid that now there is a trend in the opposite direction. There is definitely a trend, and how far it will go I do not know. All over the country there are signs that employers are again resisting the organizational efforts of their employees.

Mrs. Shipley: May I ask the hon. member a question?

Mr. MacInnis: Certainly.

Mrs. Shipley: I should like to know if the hon. member would suggest that every veteran in this country who has received benefits by reason of the representations made to the government by the Legion should be forced to join the Legion and pay his dues, or if every person who goes to church should be compelled to join that church and pay the proportionate costs of operating the church.

Mr. MacInnis: It is my understanding that such church duties are required of certain people, but I cannot talk about that from experience. The Legion and the churches are an altogether different thing from the relationship between employers and employees. Does the hon. member propose that an employee need not help pay for the benefits he receives from the union? Is he entitled to take those benefits and give nothing in return? I would prefer Mr. Justice Rand's opinion. He says, no, you are getting benefits and you should pay for those benefits. The government of this country—and the hon. member sits on the government side of the house—pass the income tax laws and say that you will pay your income tax.

Mrs. Shipley: That is a different thing.

Mr. MacInnis: It is the same thing.

Mr. Pierre Gauthier (Porineuf): I should like to say a few words on this bill, just as I have in the past on two different occasions when this measure was presented to the house