

March 9

All Parties Give Backing To Ontario Labor Board

Unanimity on a major issue was reached in the Legislature yesterday when all parties agreed that representations should be made to Ottawa asking for amendments to P.C. 1003, the National Labor Code, in the interests of proper labor-management relations.

Opposition Leader E. B. Jolliffe, in moving adjournment of the House to consider a matter of public importance, described as "fantastic" the decision of the National War Labor Board in upholding two recent appeals from judgments of the Ontario Labor Relations Board. Mr. Jolliffe referred to the report that the seven-man Ontario board had been on the verge of resigning in protest over the restrictions placed on its work by Ottawa.

Labor Minister Charles Daley, in a lengthy statement on the entire situation, said it was not correct that the entire board had threatened to resign, though perhaps one member might have said so. But the board was thoroughly dissatisfied, he said.

Ottawa Responsibility

Attorney-General Leslie Blackwell, after expressing agreement with the remarks of Mr. Jolliffe, and praising the efforts of Mr. Daley to adjust the situation, remarked that there was no necessity of bringing into question the good or bad faith of the members of the National Board. It was a responsibility of the Dominion Government and the Dominion Minister of Labor could, if he desired, make the necessary recommendations to the Cabinet for amendment to P.C. 1003.

The discussions showed unanimity from all parts of the House except from the Liberal group, Mr. Blackwell said. He added, addressing his question to Liberal House Leader M. F. Hepburn: "I would like to ask the member for Elgin if he has an attitude on this matter?"

"I had not intended to take part in this debate," Mr. Hepburn replied. "I concur in the remarks of the Attorney-General. As far as my views and those in this group are concerned, we share the opinions generally expressed this afternoon."

Premier George Drew wound up the debate by voicing the determination of his Government to do everything possible to have the Dominion Government amend the labor code.

Outlines Case

Reading from a news report in The Globe and Mail that the Ontario Labor Relations Board had been on the verge of resigning Tuesday because of recent reversal of two of its decisions by the National

War Labor Board, Mr. Jolliffe said the difference arose out of an appeal from the Ontario Board in the cases of employees of Wright-Hargreaves and Sylvanite mines. The Ontario Board's ruling was reversed. It had ordered a "run-off" vote when the Mining, Mill and Smelter Workers' Union had received a majority of votes as bargaining agent but not a majority of all workers in the two mines. This the National Board would not permit, leaving 88 per cent of the employees of one mine and 85 per cent of the other without collective bargaining.

"The National Board reached a perverse, nonsensical and utterly disastrous decision," Mr. Jolliffe declared. "If the process of certification is to continue, this decision will have to be rectified."

He termed the National Board's decision "fantastic reasoning," affecting the whole future of P.C. 1,003 since the board had stated procedure for the Ontario Board to follow. "It will have the effect," he said, "of shelving all future applications for certification unless a substantial majority of employees have joined a union."

On Majority Voting.

It was "nonsensical," Mr. Jolliffe said, to require a majority vote of all employees before certification instead of a majority of those voting. This procedure was not applied in any other election, Provincial or municipal, and he pointed out no member of the Legislature had a majority of all the voters on the voters' list.

Foreseeing serious difficulties unless the situation was corrected, Mr. Jolliffe said the greater part of the blame "can be laid at the door of the Dominion Government and the utterly absurd and incompetent Minister of Labor, Mr. Humphrey Mitchell."

Labor Minister Daley rose to say he was to a great extent in agreement with Mr. Jolliffe on the question and praised the work of the Ontario Board.