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HERE'S WHAT STRIKE
ARBITRATOR THINKS

Are some union officers mere messenger boys for unreasonable elements in the union? Should management give unions a full schedule of job classifications and wage rates? Hon. C. P. McTague of Toronto answers yes to both these questions in his important arbitration finding in the dispute between Canada Packers and Burns and Co. and the CIO Packinghouse Workers Union.

As was expected, the finding follows closely the general pattern of the Swift Canadian settlement, which was reached without government intervention. There are one or two important additions; notably a no-strike pledge, assuring peace at least until Aug., 1948.

But the arbitrator's pungent opinion on current union and management practices should be of greatest interest to management and labor generally.

For example: He is afraid that the tendency of Packinghouse union officers is to merely collect the maximum demands at convention time in May, no matter how exorbitant or extravagant.

Then in June they are presented to the companies. This, he says, is a technique which may satisfy very aggressive and unreasonable members, but it is far from being a constructive foundation for collective bargaining.

"It does seem to me," he goes on, "that union officers have some responsibility in formulating demands which carry their own judgment, rather than making themselves mere messenger boys for unreasonable elements."

Company Tardy in Replying
On the company side, he feels there is a tendency to hold back a reply to the union for an "unreasonable" length of time. "then the trouble begins. The contract expires. Meetings are held and a strike results. Then the true collective bargaining process begins to take place in the very worst auspices for its success—in the midst of a strike."

This, Mr. McTague says, must be clear to the parties as bad collective bargaining. But perhaps it is healthy that a third party should say it. If a healthy relationship is to be built up, he feels union demands must be of a responsible kind, and the companies must reply promptly.

As for making wage schedules available to the union, the arbitrator says: "I was amazed to learn that in this particular industry there was no provision for communication of classifications and wages to the union."

"Both companies submitted that they were always prepared to disclose the wage rates of an individual workman but were not prepared to disclose the full schedule. I am of the opinion that this goes to the root of genuine collective bargaining."

"How can bona fide collective bargaining be carried on when the union is kept in the dark as to classifications and wages paid? I think a clause should be introduced into respective contracts by which companies undertake to furnish the union with a schedule of classifications....."

On the issue of the packing industry's being national in character, he says: "I do not believe that wages should necessarily be made uniform throughout. Neither, on the other hand do I believe that certain districts should remain chronic low-wage areas because of factors that are not fundamentally related to wages at all."

Against Rand Formula
On union security: "For a time I thought the solution lay in the Rand Formula. However, (this) involves compulsory checkoff, a principle which does not appear to have received recognition in any provincial legislation, except under certain conditions in Nova Scotia. "I have grave doubts that the

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MORE BATH TUBS COMING.

Most of the serious shortages in plumbing and heating for new homes "will disappear" in 1948. But steel pipe is likely to stay scarce because it's made largely from American "skelp," which continues tight. So said W. C. Hodgson, of Toronto, in his report as retiring president to the 15th annual meeting of the Canadian Institute of Plumbing & Heating in Montreal.

Rand Formula will necessarily promote greater responsibility on the part of the union, therefore good industrial relations. I think, on the other hand, that the modern tendency is in the direction of non-compulsion as far as minorities are concerned, and away from the compulsory contract labor principle.

"Unions are entitled to exercise their own disciplinary measures over their members but I do not think that an employer should be placed in the position of providing additional sanctions or depriving employees of the right to work, merely because the employee has got into difficulties with the union."



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