

Most Serious Charges

At the time of writing, yesterday, the specific nature of the charges against certain "strike leaders" had not been officially communicated to the public.

Today the full text of the informations on which warrants were issued and executed is before the public. Certain "leaders" and others are charged with sedition and conspiracy against the constitutional government of Canada. Included in the charges of sedition are the following allegations:

"That the men did conspire against his person, King George V."

"That they conspired with intent against the constitutional government of Canada."

"That they conspired with intent to oppose the authority of constables appointed by the city of Winnipeg."

"That certain articles published in the Western Labor News were published with intent to ridicule the constitutional government of the Dominion."

The charge of seditious conspiracy, along with an innuendo of considerable length, reads:

"That these men did conspire with intent to overthrow the constitutional government of the Dominion of Canada."

An Ottawa dispatch, published today, says deportation proceedings are contemplated against men charged with sedition, or who have been guilty of conspiracy.

That the authorities intend proceeding under the well-established laws of the land, may be taken as irrevocably decided upon.

Let us say, further, that the prosecutions have been invited; challenged, indeed.

If the so-called alleged "Reds" are consistent, they should welcome the prosecutions, because, during the later days of the disturbances, while charges of sedition have been hurled at them by tens of thousands of citizens, also through the press, they have repudiated sedition motives, or having used seditious language.

So the position today, in a word, is this: The evidence will prove that a crime or crimes lie against them, or that the charges are unfounded.

The assumption, technical as it may seem, and as it is, in the majority of instances, is that a man "is innocent until proven guilty."

But the law has a procedure—and there has been only one procedure since the beginning of the Christian era—and that procedure is, that where the suspicion is strong enough against a man to warrant action, he is duly apprehended and duly tried.

The law, having laid its hand on a man, the well-established practice is to bring forward all that is against him and all that is in his favor, and have the question of his innocence or guilt decided by a judge or by a jury.

Nothing fairer is known under God's heaven, and the State, the government of Canada, is now proceeding to the trial of the "leaders" who are under the very serious charge of sedition.

"Collective Bargaining," the Rights of Labor, Union Regulations, Employers' Regulations, and all such matters which come under proper and the very freest and fullest discussion, should not be confounded with the charges or the crimes now laid against certain "leaders."

The issue before the courts of the nation is whether, under any circumstances, men shall be permitted to defy the laws of the nation, and whether they shall, by word or act, or both, assert a lawless authority against legally constituted authority.

The issue must not be beclouded.

It is the duty of every citizen to **OBEY THE LAW**, in the spirit as well as the letter.

There may be those—there are those—who question, probably for good reasons, the selection of the date on which the arrests were made. There may be those—there are those—who would have preferred that the arrests should have been made in the day time, and that the accused men should have been placed in a city, rather than a rural prison. We may have our own opinions on these points, but the main question, and the paramount matter of importance, is upholding the Canadian constitution and law by the duly constituted authorities to the end of serving the ends of justice.

The State has stepped in in its own time and as it thought best, and the State will give the men charged with serious crimes a fair trial.

While awaiting the pronouncement of the courts of the State, in which all citizens have their part, on the guilt or innocence of the accused "leaders," the plain and very important duty still remains of mak-

ing every reasonable and sane effort to bring in the era of industrial peace, honorable alike to Employers and Employees.

The issue before the courts is not the issue of the strike.