

*RADICAL CHANGE
OR REVOLUTION
IS PREDICTED*

Witnesses Suggest Economic Remedies to Royal Commission

"Revolution" as the only alternative in the solution of capital and labor problems, was mentioned twice Monday afternoon, by witnesses in the city hall at the final Winnipeg session of the Royal Commission on Industrial relations. The commission is in Fort William today.

"The haves and have-nots will fight," said Charles Stewart, an electrician. "The fight is on right now and a class war will be a bitter thing."

F. J. Welwood, a manufacturer of felt products, said unless there was a radical change, including the confiscation of wealth so that every one would be a producer, the world would lose its civilization.

Most of the witnesses blamed the high cost of living, unequal distribution of products, wages incommensurate with the cost of living and excess profits, for the industrial unrest. Workers said that conditions which give motor cars to one man and hardly a living to another must cease and that they were willing to fight for their rights. They frankly said that their demands, while ostensibly for higher wages and shorter hours, aimed to procure for the workingman his share in the products of his toil.

Representatives of labor said that the capitalistic class had fattened off the labor of the workingman for years. Representatives of the employers accused the organized working class of hindering production.

Causes of Discontent

"The high cost of living has very much to do with this unrest," testified Mrs. R. F. McWilliams, chairman of the Local Council of women, representing 60 organized clubs. "Workers are human beings with relations common to all. Much of the burden falls on the woman of the

household. Her work is to keep the children properly clothed and fed with the money which her husband receives. At present prices she has to pay \$120 a year for milk and \$260 for butter for a family of five. When the wives do not have this money for these necessities there comes a spirit of helplessness. This rapidly becomes despair. This despair is embittered by the belief that there is profiteering in necessities of life and that the government either has no power to stop it or will not.

"Naturally when a father comes from a home where this is the feeling he will have a bias toward discontent. I urge on your commission to take steps to remedy this condition immediately."

"How would you overcome profiteering? Let the government take over production and distribution?" asked Tom Moore, labor member of the commission.

Mrs. McWilliams: I don't see why this would not be possible. I'd suggest, too, the establishment of a social standard.

Mr. Welwood said causes of industrial unrest were unequal distribution of wealth and inequality of hardships.

"We will try a system at our plant," he said, "by which the three managing directors will represent the consumers, the employes and the capital in the plant. Two per cent. will be the maximum dividend on the capital employed. We will suggest that the government supplement the wages of married men and dependents."

System Top-heavy

"You admit, then, that the present system is top-heavy?"

Mr. Welwood: "Yes, I do."

Mr. Bruce: "You suggest the confiscation of wealth as a remedy?"

Mr. Welwood: "Yes, I think so."

Mr. Moore: "Your plan, Mr. Welwood, means to take over-surplus wealth and arrange industry so that the producer has a share in his product?"

Mr. Welwood: "Yes, my plan is to make every one a producer. Profit is not necessary. We must produce for use and not for profit. We have got to have a change in the system or we will lose our civilization. During this transitional period we must have patience. A radical change must take place, but we can't do it all at once."

The high price of food and supplies is the cause of the present industrial condition, William Pearson, chairman of the Social Welfare commission, testified.

"There's a tendency of labor agitators," he said, "to exploit a temporary condition in behalf of a change which they wish to bring about in a hurry."

"We need unemployment funds and old age pensions. Our old economic system is groggy, but if capital and labor got together the condition can be met. We should have some means of removing the haunting fear which many families face as to what would happen if there should be no work. To talk of the confiscation of wealth is chimerical. We can levy taxes on wealth to provide funds to care for other exigencies. We must look at the problem from the standpoint of Christianity and service. There should be an active propaganda in the churches for both sides to get together and settle the matter."

Blames Government

Hugh Howatt, accountant, blamed industrial unrest to the non-interference of the government with the private ownership of capital. He urged excise legislation as a step in the right direction. He said wages were not sufficient to meet the high cost of living.

Mrs. Claude Nash, a member of the Manitoba Minimum Wage board, said the increase in the cost of living was reflected in the jump of the minimum wage for girls from \$9.50 to \$12.50 a week. The board's survey showed that 50 per cent. of the women employed in Winnipeg were receiving more than the minimum.

Martin McKittrick, property owner, blamed the trusts and monopolies for the high cost of living. He said it was a "simple matter" to make the adjustment: abolish all privilege by heavy taxation.

E. N. Barton, a brass manufacturer, said the worker would never be satisfied, no matter what overtures capital made to him.

"The social system is to blame for the present crisis," he said. "It was hastened by the war. The desire now is to do less and get more of the other fellow's production. We must make money. I'd be in favor of repudiating the national debt and turning all the land over to the government. That might help some."

D. Wylie, unskilled laborer, blamed organized labor for the high cost of living. He said there were too many parasites and too many merchants to provide a fair distribution of wealth under the present system.

"What Mr. Hugg meant in his industrial council system," said Chas. Stewart, electrician, "is that we, the workers, will produce a cheaper commodity so that the manufacturers can compete in the world market. They want to undersell the world and want to use us for it."

"The workingmen are past that stage. We're not so much interested now in work itself as what work produces. We are tired of seeing the capitalistic class grow wealthy off our product. We will be forced to the same living standard of the Japanese and Chinese if the struggle for world markets continues. These two countries can produce more cheaply than any other and the nation, under the present system which will rule, will be the one that controls the world market."

Says Fight Is On

"The workers are getting wiser. They realize that the profits which enabled Ford to hike his earnings from 600 to 1,200 per cent, came out of the workers' hides. The worker knows that these good things were procured by his energy and he wants some of them."

"There's no solution that I see unless the offer comes from the ruling class. The haves and have-nots will fight. The fight is now on. It is increasing in intensity. Unless a change comes soon, the anarchism we talk about in Russia will be a tea party to what it will be in Canada."

Mr. Moore: "Have you any suggestions as to how this condition can be remedied?"

Mr. Stewart: "No, sir. I haven't it all cut and dried."

Mr. Moore: "What would you do?"

Mr. Stewart: "I suggest that the master class hand over the control to the working class, and that the worker should have the machinery of control."

J. O. Newton, vice-president of the Great War Veterans' association, said that returned men believed labor and capital were necessary to industry and essential to the development of the country. He said one cause of discontent was that returned soldiers, members of trade unions, refused to work beside enemy

aliens, members of the same union. He said of the 340,000 enemy aliens registered with the police in Canada, 94,500 would be undersirable if the percentage of Manitoba was the general average. He urged the deportation of the undesirables.

W. R. Lane, a street car conductor, suggested a maximum wage of \$5.000 and a minimum of \$2,000 as a panacea. Frank Paton, unskilled laborer, suggested suitable housing, gardens, and employes' insurance—as means to alleviate the present industrial unrest.