

Canada Labour Code

depends on the season of the year and on the weather. It is not uncommon to see a line up to ten, 12, 15 trucks at elevators during the course of a day, and there is no way the agent can shut down at six o'clock in the evening and leave trucks lined up.

I believe the elevator companies and their employees who manage the elevators are, generally speaking, happy with the legislation as it exists. I would ask the minister, if he has not already done so, to get in touch with the minister in charge of the Wheat Board, who has obviously consulted members of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool. Perhaps the hon. minister has received representations direct from the wheat pool. If so, I hope he will take them into consideration and will make the necessary changes to the act. It may be by way of an exception or amendment, but I trust he will take the necessary steps to accommodate the requests of the grain companies and their employees.

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, as my colleague, the hon. member for Winnipeg North (Mr. Orlikow) indicated in a speech last night, we are in general support of the proposals in Bill C-8. We are prepared to give it approval at second reading so that it can go to the standing committee for detailed study. Because my colleague covered the waterfront last night, it is hardly necessary for me to do it again. But I thought I would like to take the floor for a few minutes, mainly to deal with two or three specific matters that are raised in the bill.

May I say, when I hear some of the opposition to this kind of legislation, I feel even more inclined to support what the minister is doing. There are those who seem to think that by giving labour additional holidays or additional vacation time, the cost of production increases and our productivity suffers. I wish those who pronounce those views could come up to date and realize that a labour force consisting of persons who are recognized as persons and whose rights are recognized is a much more productive labour force than one consisting of just so many hands not far removed from the days of slavery. The whole concept of the right of labour to have a say in its conditions of work has greatly improved productivity in modern decades, and anything we can do to push along that process is all to the good.

I am glad to see, in the bill, one or two new things such as bereavement leave, provision for sick leave, the portion of the bill that deals with unjust dismissal, and so on. We shall look with very keen interest at the proposals in the bill which try to ensure unorganized workers some of the rights and benefits that have been won by those who are organized.

I should like to ask my good friend, the minister: What happened to an item that was in last session's Bill C-32? The minister may remember that toward the end of last session he introduced Bill C-32 to amend the Canada Labour Code mainly with respect to general holidays. In that bill he included Heritage Day and Boxing Day. In this session we have Bill C-8, and Heritage Day seems to have been dropped. I realize that the Secretary of State (Mr. Roberts) announced earlier in this session, in response to a question of mine, that the

[Mr. Neil.]

government had decided not to proceed with Heritage Day during this session in any respect. The argument that he gave was that this was a time of restraint. I find it very difficult to discover much evidence of restraint around this place.

Mr. Paproski: He means after the next election.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): The time for governments to bring in goodies is before an election, not after.

Mr. Paproski: These guys work it differently.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Yes. The whole argument that, because we are in a time of restraint, workers must not be given the benefit of an extra holiday, is seeing things completely in reverse. By that kind of logic one could argue that we should cancel all holidays and make everyone work six or seven days a week, 52 weeks a year. The minister would not argue that that would increase productivity. He knows that would decrease productivity and we would have a very unhappy labour force. I contend, Mr. Speaker, that argument for a holiday midway between Christmas and the New Year period and the Easter period is a good one, especially in this country. It is a long pull from Christmas to Easter, and if we are going to have many winters like the one we are having now, it is all the more reason to have such a holiday.

I remind the Minister of Labour (Mr. Munro) that a few years ago one of the railway management-labour disputes was finally settled by the adjudication of Mr. Justice Emmett Hall. He knows that in the settlement Mr. Justice Hall made of that dispute there was a provision for Heritage Day to be added to the holidays with pay which railway workers would get as soon as it was passed by parliament. Mr. Justice Hall and those who were involved in that adjudication seemed to think at that time, because a bill for Heritage Day was before parliament and making good progress, that it would probably be through in no time at all.

Well, already the railway workers have lost two or three of those Heritage Day holidays that they thought they got resulting from Mr. Justice Hall's settlement of that dispute. Railway workers still feel today they have been treated unfairly and treated with lack of faith in the fact that this day has not been established. In fact, there has been a postcard campaign about the matter which is under way right now, and those who signed these cards are aware of the fact that a bill for Heritage Day got second reading and committee of the whole passage a year or so ago. They are aware that during the last session the government had two bills before the House concerning Heritage Day. But now, when we get Bill C-8, it is not there at all. I hope the minister will listen to argument about the matter when we get this bill into committee. It is an amendment which can be easily made in committee. It will keep faith with the railway workers in terms of Mr. Hall's settlement of that last dispute.

● (1632)

Canadians generally would welcome the idea of a weekend holiday on the third Monday in February. Surely we can do