

Supply—Labour

Grégoire) a few moments ago and a little later, by the hon. member for Trois-Rivières (Mr. Mongrain).

This concerns the problems of the Confederation of National Trade Unions with the Canada Labour Relations Board. And, for once, I fully agree with the hon. member for Lapointe. I am even surprised that he should have spoken as he did, in view of the separatist views which dominate the political action of the hon. member for Lapointe.

Indeed, Mr. Chairman, if I shared his convictions, I would endeavour to prevent any change in the procedures followed by the C.L.R.B. for I am quite convinced that the present state of affairs within that federal agency, already stirs up great dissatisfaction with federal institutions, and will continue to do so, in an increasing number of Quebec workers. Now, it so happens that workers, as a group, have until now been the least influenced in Quebec by the separatist movement and the fever of constitutional change now disturbing our province.

However, if the C.L.R.B. procedures are not changed, Mr. Chairman, I greatly fear, and I am not the only one, that dissatisfaction will overcome our workers and that, because of readily corrected anomalies, we may witness the development in the working people of an atmosphere prone to degenerate later into political strikes and other demonstrations of all kinds, of no benefit to anyone.

I do not propose now to repeat the arguments advanced by the hon. member for Lapointe (Mr. Grégoire). They are already well known by the parties concerned.

There is another one, however, which I would like to place on record. It deals with the disparity of representation between the C.N.T.U. and the C.L.C. and with the effects of such disparity on C.L.R.B. decisions regarding union certification.

The C.L.C. has three representatives and the C.N.T.U. only one. So when it comes to certifying a union for which the two groups are competing, this disproportion becomes odious, notwithstanding the fact that four other representatives, those of the employers, also have their say.

In such a case, Mr. Chairman, the C.L.R.B. has duties which are nearly judicial and because it carries out responsibilities of that nature, it must guarantee the party seeking justice the same impartiality guaranteed by ordinary courts. Now the ordinary citizen has the right to obtain justice before the courts

[Mr. Pelletier.]

and also every right to believe that he is getting it.

I submit, Mr. Chairman, that the C.N.T.U. workers have, on the contrary, serious reasons to distrust the C.L.R.B. in its present condition, not because of its members, but because of its very constitution, since the representatives of a rival union or those of employers do not appear suitable to judge impartially, and it seems to me extremely important that the chairman of the board should be called upon to decide alone when the C.N.T.U. and the C.L.C. are competing for certification.

Finally, if the rumour is true, if the C.L.R.B. has actually postponed for several months its decision concerning the C.B.C. employees in Montreal, I cannot exaggerate the danger of such action.

For months already, the board has been considering that problem. Another delay of several months might wear out the patience of those workers, which has proved very resilient until now but which seems on the point of giving out.

Of course, there is no question of urging the government to influence the decisions of the C.L.R.B. On the contrary, it is important to respect the independence of that body. But it is necessary also to realize the danger, and if an amendment to the act itself is needed to solve the problem, the minister must not hesitate to introduce in the house the amendments called for.

[*English*]

Mr. Muir (Cape Breton North and Victoria): Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the opportunity of having a few moments to say a word or two about the estimates of the Department of Labour. First of all, let me say I will not be making a philosophical dissertation. I think my remarks could more readily be associated with a bread and butter speech. Someone this afternoon said a lot of philosophical discussion was taking place. It is not my intention to partake in such a discussion. I will leave that to the professorial types.

Regrettably, I was not in the chamber, because of other duties, when the minister made his introductory statement. However, I presume it was an optimistic statement and that the minister referred to the unemployment rate and the situation throughout Canada. Unfortunately, we have a bad situation in the maritimes where the unemployment rate is twice the national average, according to the latest statistics. I hope today I will have the