

*Labour Conditions*

will go forward, and any other sort of community will not.

**Mr. H. E. Gray (Essex South):** Mr. Speaker, I am happy to have the opportunity to rise and say a few brief words in support of this legislation creating a Canada labour standards code. When I say this I know I reflect the views of a great many members on this side of the house, some who entered it in 1962 and others who entered it in 1963, because this proposal formed an important part of the program on which we sought election in those two years.

I think it could also be pointed out that some of the happenings of a more sensational nature in this house have tended to obscure the fact, to a quite significant degree, many of the other important measures in that program have already been presented to parliament and put into effect. One example is the area development agency and another is the government's tax incentive program. Now we have the Canada labour standards code presented and this has been done, so far as I and the other Liberal members to whom I have referred are concerned, not because of any prodding by hon. members on the other side of the house but because of our own belief in and feeling of conviction with respect to the need for this type of legislation.

Though reference was made by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) to 1919—it must be some type of mystic number for the N.D.P.—in this respect his was a voice of and from the past. The fact is that members of the Liberal party who entered the house in 1962 and 1963 made pledges during those elections, pledges which were part of the program on which we campaigned. It is a source of gratification to us that this legislation has been presented to parliament less than two years since the government took office, and within less than three years of the pledges which members such as I made when seeking election to the house. I suggest it is only realistic to look at this matter in the context of today's world of economics and labour relations.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre yesterday thanked the government on behalf of the organized labour movement, but it has occurred to me that when one considers the number of union members not affiliated with the N.D.P., and the fact that many Liberal members from urban areas could not possibly have been elected without the support of men and women who are members of unions, many of which are indeed formally affiliated with the N.D.P., one must conclude

that the hon. member extended himself a bit too far in expressing thanks on behalf of the entire labour movement and everyone in it. I say this with the greatest respect to the hon. member, and with respect for his contributions to the fields in which he has worked.

This bill, covering approximately half a million workers in private industry under federal jurisdiction, will undoubtedly serve as an example to the provinces of what similar standards under their jurisdiction should be, and the present situation in Ontario shows how this type of example—or pressure if you like—is needed. Yesterday the hon. member for Ontario (Mr. Starr) suggested that the regulations of the Ontario provincial government were recently modified, so that in some areas the minimum wage is \$1 per hour while in other areas it is \$1.25 per hour. In fairness to him I mention that he said that if he was not accurate he wished to be corrected. It is my understanding that a rate of \$1.25 per hour applies only in Ottawa, Hamilton, Toronto zones, and formerly in some other industrial areas. For other workers, different rates have been set which are to increase at various intervals until \$1 an hour will be the rate for both male and female workers by the end of 1965. In addition there are special rates provided for certain industries; the highest of them is \$1.25 for construction industry workers.

Surely the province of Ontario has reached a point at which a minimum wage of \$1.25 can be set now without any dislocation being caused.

It is unfortunate that the government of Ontario has adopted a regional approach to the minimum wage question but has not as yet adopted a regional approach when it comes to providing tax incentives to encourage industry to establish itself in areas which were or are areas of slow growth. If it is correct that the level of the economy in certain parts of Ontario will not support a minimum wage of \$1.25—and this I cannot accept—I would think the province has an obligation to its people to co-operate fully with the federal government in its efforts to help slow growth regions catch up with the rest of the country.

I believe the establishment of this minimum wage will in itself increase purchasing power and thereby provide an outlet, and improve the market for goods and services throughout this country. I should like to refer in this context to an article which appeared recently in the *Financial Times*. Mr.