

*Canada Labour Code*

unemployment. Anybody who makes the fuss that he made over seven million man-days lost through strikes and at the same time ignores the 150 million man-days lost through unemployment, seems to me reactionary to the extreme.

In similar vein, the hon. member for Timmins (Mr. Roy), displaying the bias he has shown for many years in his own business enterprises in the Timmins area, indicated how terrible unions were, how bad the whole union process was and how wrong the minister was in introducing this legislation, which frankly is not that far advanced. I think the minister will agree it is legislation that is necessary now and the need for it is immediate. However, the hon. member for Timmins indicated this is a terrible piece of legislation which gives in to the unions and gives them certain rights under the law. The legislation does not seem to me to be exceptionally generous and it is in keeping with the labour practices in some of the enterprises that he operates.

Other members have, in my opinion, been reasonable about the changes that are necessary in our labour legislation. There is no doubt that everybody in this country is concerned with the question of strikes. Certainly no one in this country has failed to ask himself why 200,000 or more workers, mainly in the public service, in the province of Quebec are now on strike. No one in this country, when trying to catch an aeroplane, did not ask why civil servants in the transport field were on strike. I am sure that those of us from Toronto who have to put our garbage in plastic bags and leave them in our cellars ask the same question. But I think we should look at the question in terms of whether this legislation will solve the problems. I think in many cases it will not.

Personally, I am not in a position to suggest what would solve these specific problems, but I think that the willingness of this government to examine representations made by both management and labour, those in the management and labour fields who are interested in collective bargaining only, will probably provide some of the answers. I suggest that the minister should look very closely, in terms of federal legislation, at fields where the federal government conducts operations and where negotiations are conducted with Treasury Board. It seems to me—I may be wrong, but I think this is something the minister will have to consider—that in all cases where unions negotiate with a Crown corporation or a department of government they are not eyeball to eyeball with those who are going to put up the money to meet the pay increases of improved conditions that are being demanded. For example, we often find that those who are negotiating with civil service organizations, whether it be a union or an association, reach the position where they can make no further offers and the only alternative open to the workers is either to accept the offer or to call a strike.

I was very interested in the remarks made by the previous speaker. I think we owe him a vote of thanks for having done research in this field, because he pointed out that in cases where the union or association saw fit to accept, at the final stage of the negotiations, the decision of an arbitrator, sometimes the arbitrator made a greater award than the amount previously offered. Immediately we should ask ourselves, was it because the arbitrator was

more generous than Treasury Board would have been in direct negotiations, or was it because the initial offer resulted from a flexible position taken by the government negotiators because they felt there was a real possibility of binding arbitration? In cases where the government thought a strike would result, were they using their position as a rich employer to influence, in some cases, a fairly weak treasury in the union or association concerned?

If that is the position, then I think the minister will agree with me that he will have to look at the end result of negotiations with Treasury Board in view of the complete lack of satisfaction on the part of the unions who have dealt with the board, in several instances the dispute being referred back to cabinet for their decision.

I am reminded of the days when we used to negotiate with the gold miners. We used to negotiate with the manager and after a period of time he would finally say, "I cannot agree with you, simply because I do not have the authority to do so. Would you grant a half hour's recess while I phone my principals?" Then he phoned someone in New York or Montreal, and a board of directors we did not know about meeting in another area decided whether consideration should be given to the request being made or whether the workers should go on strike. This arrangement was totally unsatisfactory and it is one that I think is being duplicated now in terms of negotiating with the federal government.

Has it ever occurred to the minister to ask why most of the strikes taking place today are in the public service sector rather than in industry? It is true that occasionally there has been a strike in the automotive industry, or in the steel industry, and in recent years there have been a limited number of strikes in the minerals industry. True, most are under provincial jurisdiction. But leaving aside the jurisdictional question, is it not surprising to find that most of the strikes taking place today are against government, Crown corporations or government agencies of one form or another, which result in serious dislocation?

This bill has been endorsed by the labour congress, not so much because it has many good things in it but because it does not have any bad things in it, I presume. But passing these amendments to the labour code is but the first step. Other steps will have to be taken, and I am sure they will not be taken by an appointed labour relations board that is nominated by the government. This problem will not be solved merely by appointing a board composed of representatives of labour, management and interested parties. It will have to be solved, or those reactionaries who say there will be anarchy in the streets, with the workers rising against the government, will be correct. They will be correct only if we do not provide the proper machinery.

• (2130)

The suggested solution would be to eliminate organization, make it weak, do not give it any room in which to operate or allow it any field in which it could truly represent the workers. That is one way. But I suggest if that happens there will be anarchy throughout this country.

The labour leaders of this country have as much responsibility as most employers. It is only the small employer who causes difficulty for the unions. Most large