

period of time, the parties could not come to an agreement and it was apparent that no agreement would be reached in an appropriate period of time. At that point one must look at the facts.

In the case of hospital services, what can one say? These hospital services involve the veterans of Canada who require hospital care. If any member of this House of Commons wants to deprive the veterans of Canada of hospital care over a protracted period of time, I invite that member to get up and say so. I invite that member to get up and say: "Yes, I believe that the veterans of Canada should be deprived of effective and proper hospital care services over a protracted period of time, because the workers who administer those services are having a wage dispute with the government".

If that is the view of members, I wish they would say that very clearly and not say that they believe in collective bargaining and that they believe that the collective bargaining process should be let alone to resolve any labour disputes. Of course we all believe in the collective bargaining process. We also must recognize that when the process fails, when the system fails, then there is a duty to consider the effect of that failure and the effect of that failure on the persons involved, in this case the veterans.

I say with some concern that we should have a better system in Canada, but I do not say with any embarrassment that I for one, and all members of the government I am sure, are agreed on this point, that if it comes to choosing between continuation of effective hospital services to veterans and the temporary deprivation of a right seen by the workers involved, we have to choose the veterans, and that is what we are doing in Bill C-49. We will do everything possible to see that the workers involved get a fair and effective settlement in the end result.

Now let us talk about the ships' crews. We are talking about the coast guard, fishery patrol vessels and so on. I do not have to go too far to find examples of why back to work legislation is necessary in this situation. Yesterday when we were debating this bill a barge off the coast of Nova Scotia broke away from its tow line. It was carrying 150 tonnes of light diesel fuel. I do not think any member would like to see that barge go up on the rocks and cause a massive oil spill that would result in environmental damages that would take months, years and even decades to resolve.

Government Orders

According to an Ottawa *Citizen* report, there were on December 11, after this bill was introduced in the House of Commons, 41 large ocean-going ships which would be jeopardized in terms of not being able to remove themselves from the St. Lawrence Seaway before the closing date of December 19.

What did those 41 ships have on board? They were carrying grain. They were carrying 1.3 million tonnes of grain. I wish some member from western Canada, from the grain-growing area, would get up in this House of Commons and say that they do not really care what happens to that grain, that what they care about is that the government and the workers involved should resolve their dispute over whatever period of time it takes to resolve it.

Would somebody in the New Democratic Party from Saskatchewan get up in this House and tell western farmers, grain producers, the people who are involved in this process, that the strike will go on indefinitely regardless of the ability of the parties to reach a settlement, and that grain can freeze in the St. Lawrence, the 41 ships can stay there into March and April of 1990 when the ice breaks up in the St. Lawrence, then they can leave.

Again, we all appreciate the collective bargaining system. We all appreciate the desirability of labour and management settling their own disputes, but sometimes it becomes our responsibility to take action. If members from Saskatchewan want, they can say: "No, no, we have to live with the result of failure in the collective bargaining system. Let the 41 ships with millions of tonnes of grain freeze up in the St. Lawrence, to heck with western grain farmers, to heck with the grain industry. They will have to take the loss of that labour dispute".

We cannot accept that. We appreciate the good work done by the coast guard. We appreciate the desirability of having wage settlements and all matters involved in disputes resolved by the parties, but there comes a time for action.

What is the action we have taken? Very briefly, Bill C-49 provides for a conciliation. That conciliation will be binding on the parties.

Because I have a particular interest in their situation, I believe that as a result of this legislation ships' crews will have a very beneficial settlement.