

• (4:30 p.m.)

What I do not like about all the arguments against a decent fair minimum wage is the amount of the load which is laid, by implication, on those who are at the bottom of the income scale, in terms of keeping the economy going and so on. The Canada Labour Standards Code presently has a provision for eight general holidays a year. We have made one or two improvements in this bill relating to the eight holidays but I think it might well have been increased to nine or ten holidays. I have a bill before Parliament seeking a ninth general holiday, and there is nothing inconsistent between that bill and my suggestion that we have ten. However, we must take them one at a time.

I press the even more urgent point of the length of annual vacation. We have moved a bit on this. When we first got the vacations with pay provision through this Parliament in the days of the Diefenbaker government it provided for one week after one year's service and for two weeks after two years' service or more. We got that improved so that it is now two weeks after one year's service. It seems to me that with the steps that are now having to be taken to cope with unemployment, and in view of the changes in our work patterns and way of life, it is not at all unreasonable to be talking now about three weeks' or even four weeks' vacation with pay.

As a minimum, I have suggested that this legislation should be amended to provide for three weeks after three years' service with the same employer, and I hope the Minister of Labour will be able to take a few minutes from his preparation of the speech that he is going to make after I sit down to listen to my plea. Within a year from now we will probably be out on the hustings, and who knows who will sit in the Minister of Labour's seat when we come back. However, one of the ways in which the minister might increase his chances of coming back to sit on that side of the House is by bringing in another amendment to the Canada Labour (Standards) Code next year, and one pretty sensible amendment would be to increase the number of weeks vacation per year to three weeks after three years' service.

I hope that I have not violated the tone of what I said at the start of my speech. I think this is a good bill. There is nothing in it that we are against and we shall vote for it when the vote is called, though that will probably not be necessary. However, I still wish that the minister had dealt with the three points I have made in a more progressive manner, namely the minimum wage, the number of general holidays in a year, and the length of the holidays known as vacations with pay.

Before I take my seat, Mr. Speaker, I have one technical suggestion to make. As I understand it, when this bill is passed and the Revised Statutes of Canada for 1970 overcome all the technical obstacles and are the law of the land, we will then have one great big Canada Labour Code which will include the Canada Labour (Standards) Code, the Canada Labour (Safety) Code, the Industrial Relations and Disputes Investigation Act and some three or four other pieces of legislation. Therefore, I express the hope that the Department of Labour, at an early

Canada Labour (Standards) Code

date, will make arrangements to have an office consolidation made of this whole piece of labour legislation so that it would be available to us in one volume. In addition, I hope it would be printed in sufficient quantities that those who want to know what the labour law of Canada is will be able to find it. If the minister cannot meet my other request, I hope that he will be able to accommodate me in that regard. With that, may I say I commend him on the improvements that he has made and he has my good wishes as he goes forward to try to do more.

Hon. Bryce Mackasey (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, may I say that I, too, shall be brief. I am deeply appreciative of the co-operation shown by the opposition this afternoon, realizing that we are now getting to the end of the session and that there is a need to get as much legislation affecting all Canadians through this House as possible. Nevertheless, I would be remiss in my duties if I were not to take advantage during the course of the next 10 or 12 minutes at least to make some comments on third reading.

What I should like to do first is to say that when the unemployment insurance legislation was adopted the other evening, I did not have the opportunity of expressing my deep appreciation for the work that had been done on the bill by the Standing Committee on Labour, Manpower and Immigration. There are many critics of the Canadian parliamentary system. People who are not as familiar as they might be with Parliament often have a misconception of what Parliament is all about. Those who tend to glance at the headlines in the daily newspapers or who listen to radio and television are given rather concise reports about what takes place in Parliament and they fail to understand that good legislation such as that which we have adopted this afternoon is not the result of the exclusive efforts of the government but requires the constructive criticism of opposition members.

This bill is one that gives me a tremendous degree of satisfaction. Being a Minister of Labour at any time in history is rather difficult and is at times a thankless portfolio. People tend to think of the Minister of Labour in relation to industrial unrest and forget that as head of the department dealing not simply with organized labour but with the whole work force of the country, he has an equal responsibility to bring in the type of legislation that affects the very lives of millions of Canadians, both male and female.

As I say, this piece of legislation gives me particular satisfaction. I hope, Lord willing, that I will be able to say that I have piloted through this House three such pieces of legislation, namely the unemployment insurance legislation, the labour standards and later, probably this fall, amendments to the IRDI act which directly affect collective bargaining.

There is something about this legislation that provides a degree of satisfaction not only to me as Minister of Labour but, I am sure, to the members of the Liberal caucus who are charged primarily with industrial relations, and to hon. members opposite, particularly the hon. member for Moncton (Mr. Thomas), the hon. member for