

*Canada Labour Code*

security of employment of a significant number of employees.

• (2010)

It is unfortunate, indeed, that Bill C-183 is limited to Crown corporations or employees of the federal government. It is evident that this government is again giving proof of its foresight. If such legislation were in existence at the provincial level, the hardworking miners of the International Nickel Company and Falconbridge Nickel Mines would receive fair warning that technological changes in the mining industry would demand massive layoffs. As a result of the layoff that recently took place in Sudbury, young men and older people, some with young families, now find themselves in the ranks of the unemployed. Without warning they have been forced to seek work in other fields. Many of these workers had left other provinces to become good citizens of our area.

Mining operations are becoming more and more automated and we can expect that a greater number of employees will be either demoted, displaced or laid off in the very near future. I certainly hope that the provincial governments, under whose jurisdiction mining companies fall, will follow suit and introduce legislation very soon. Negotiations for a new contract are presently under way in Sudbury. I hope that the company will adopt similar provisions to those we find in Bill C-183 concerning technological change, even though the present provincial legislation does not require them to do so. This would certainly reduce the great anxiety which now exists among the workers and would help create a better climate of confidence by ensuring economic security in our area.

While I am on the subject of negotiations taking place in Sudbury at the moment, may I be permitted to mention that I fully endorse the request by the union, in particular, that employees be permitted to go on pension after 30 years' service. I feel that an employee in the mining industry, which is so detrimental to the health of its workers, should have the option to retire at least after 30 years' or perhaps after 25 years' service. Such an employee who has worked hard all his life could enjoy a little leisure time while his health still allowed him to do so. He could also find some type of light duty work which would allow him to live a more decent life. This would also leave more room for our younger generation which is now seeking employment. Therefore, I am very much behind an early retirement for the workers of the mines and would strongly urge the company to accept such a request.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Serré:** I see I have the approval of my friend, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles). These new amendments to the labour code affect directly the employees of Canadian National Railways in my area. As a result of automation, most of the population of Nakina in northern Ontario who were employed directly or indirectly by the CNR were forced to vacate an area in which they had been lifelong residents. This unfortunate situation which took place at Nakina a few years ago played a major role in bringing about revisions to the labour code in respect of technological change. Just last year many office employees who had settled in Capreol

were forced to move to Toronto as a result of centralization or automation. This decision was taken unilaterally by CNR management without prior consultation with the employees involved or prior notice to the community. This legislation will prevent such displacement without first conducting proper negotiations and will have the effect of bringing about a more satisfactory solution for all parties concerned.

I feel that this new labour code is long overdue and eagerly awaited by the workers of this country. The provisions dealing with technological change introduced by an employer during the life of a collective agreement is most innovative and important. When the former minister of labour was replaced by the present minister it was immediately speculated that the switch meant the government had given in to big business and manufacturers pressure to kill the controversial clause. Employers hoped that is what had happened and employees feared that it had happened. I am pleased to see that our new and able Minister of Labour (Mr. O'Connell) has kept that clause in the bill, but with a limited right to strike, making it more workable and acceptable to management and labour. At the same time, the right of management to increase efficiency through technological change will be protected by the new code just as much as job security and the continuation of pay cheques for workers affected by such change.

This is sound legislation and it is becoming better understood by chambers of commerce across the country as well as management and unions. I support it because I feel it will give more security to the workers and more stability to the economic and social life of the community, especially communities such as Sudbury in which the workers depend on one major industry for their living.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, the age of technology is disquieting for many workers. This bill will give more protection and ease labour-management relations.

That is the reason why I highly commend the Minister of Labour for having so brilliantly introduced this new Labour Code.

[*English*]

**Mr. R. N. Thompson (Red Deer):** Mr. Speaker, in rising to speak on Bill C-183 I find it very difficult to be as enthusiastic as the hon. member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Serré). However, to be fair, I think the bill does represent some improvement over its predecessor. I only wish the new minister had moved a bit further to correct some of the errors and weaknesses which remain untouched. However, in general the bill does represent a constructive improvement. I should say that in addition to its omissions, it is weak and does not really do anything in so far as giving us hope that the incidence of strikes and lock-outs will be decreased and their effects on the public diminished.

I think another area of weakness is that the bill does not take advantage of many of the reforms suggested in the Woods report of 1968. The greatest weakness of the bill lies in the fact that only about 530,000 workers in Canada will be affected by it; that is to say, it is limited to industries which fall under federal jurisdiction. When one con-