

*Industrial Relations*

**Mr. Knowles:** Mr. Speaker—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** If the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre speaks now he will conclude the debate.

**Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Mr. Speaker, if my counting is correct I believe that nine members of the house have spoken to the second reading of this bill. I am encouraged as I check over the positions taken by these nine members, in that seven have indicated they are in favour of the bill or at least that they support its principle. The eighth member, the hon. member who has just taken his seat, seems to find it difficult to believe laws have a place in establishing rights for people, but nevertheless even he is in favour of the principle set out in this bill, namely that workers should have two weeks' holidays with pay after one year's service.

That accounts for eight of the hon. members who have spoken. There is only one other, and of course he is a rather important person. I refer to the Minister of Labour. He did not indicate that he could support the bill. He did not say he was against it nor that he was going to vote against it, but he said that at the moment at any rate he could not bring himself to support it. If the house will vote in accordance with the views which have been expressed by the nine members who have spoken there is no doubt as to the result. I certainly hope that will be the case.

I am most grateful, not only to those on this side of the house in the three opposition parties who have spoken in support of the bill but for the attention given to it by the Minister of Labour. I am of course pleased with the support which has been indicated by the hon. member for Vancouver South.

In summing up, since it is hardly necessary to do anything by way of reply in view of the fact that most of the speeches have been favourable to the bill, I might repeat just one or two facts which were given earlier in the debate. It is correct to say that there is legislation regarding annual vacations with pay on the statute books of six provinces, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. Incidentally, using the formula we have had occasion to discuss yesterday and today under another heading, those six provinces represent a majority of the provinces and also a majority of the Canadian people. It seems to be pretty well indicated that this principle is accepted in this country.

However, as far as those six provinces are concerned, only two of them have legislation which provides that there shall be two weeks'

vacation with pay after one year's service, those two being British Columbia and Saskatchewan. The other four provinces provide for one week's holidays with pay after one year's service. Some of them provide for a greater length of holidays after more years of service. These provincial laws relate to employees who come under provincial labour legislation, and do not touch the 400,000 who come under federal jurisdiction. This bill would deal with that group of 400,000 workers who come under federal labour jurisdiction.

Nevertheless, I think the point should be made that there is a tendency on the part of the provinces, particularly in the labour field, to pay attention to what the other provinces are doing and to what the federal government is doing. I think if a lead could be given by the federal parliament in this matter it would hasten the day when we would have legislation of this kind throughout Canada, so that all the workers of this country would have vacations with pay as a matter of right. This is a principle which the hon. member for Burin-Burgeo accepts; and I think even he will have to agree that that can be brought about only if we use the rule of law to establish the rights to which we believe our people are entitled. After all, laws are not just the negative things that he seems to think they are; laws are not just restrictive, laws are also positive in that they establish certain rights. That is what this law is. It is similar to the laws in some of the provinces which do establish the right of working people in this country to enjoy two weeks' holidays with pay after one year's service.

May I say to the hon. member for Bow River that I indicated on May 11 when I moved second reading that I would be happy to have this bill go to the committee on industrial relations. If it is given second reading I would move that that be done, rather than the usual motion of reference to committee of the whole house.

I should like to say just a brief word further with respect to the number of employees who would be affected by this bill, following along the exchange between the hon. member for Vancouver South and myself. I think we got it clear, basing our statements on the table put on the record on May 11 by the Minister of Labour, that approximately 47 per cent of the employees who come under federal labour jurisdiction now have, by virtue of collective agreements or for other reasons, two weeks' holidays with pay after one year's service. That leaves some 53 per cent who would gain if this bill became law.