

● (1620)

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Herbert): There follows a period of ten minutes for questions or comments.

Mr. Kristiansen: Mr. Speaker, could the Hon. Member for Shefford (Mr. Lapierre) tell the House why, in view of the fact that negotiations on Parts III, IV and V of the Canada Labour Code have been taking place for some three years since the time when the then Minister of Labour on June 1, 1981 said that they would be coming soon, it was only in the last few days that Bill C-34 was given first reading? Certainly we in this caucus were aware that negotiations were progressing along the road to completion some months ago. Why has the Government, for whatever reason, placed us in the House of Commons in the position of being required to expedite the hasty implementation and proclamation of major reforms to the Canada Labour Code in order to get results before the prorogation of Parliament? If it thinks that the objective is important, why is it placing us in the position of having to forgo some of the realistic opportunities for amendment and discussion which should be the right of Parliament and of the people of Canada?

Mr. Lapierre: Mr. Speaker, I want to tell the Hon. Member that those dispositions are before the House now. If we had had the collaboration of his caucus earlier and free time in the House, I am sure we could have come forth with those modifications sooner. The consultation was a long process. We wanted to ensure that the proposed amendments would result in a consensus. It appears that is so. Most Hon. Members seem to agree with the amendments. I think it is sooner than soon. In a way the Hon. Member has to realize that there is always an end to a session. Whether it is this Bill or any other one, Bills are always proposed at the end of a session. We are hoping that the consultations beforehand were sufficient to obtain support. All of us would have liked to have had this legislation before now, but maybe it was not ready then or the spirit was not there. Now we have the political will we will be happy to pass the legislation right away.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Herbert): Other questions, comments? Debate.

[English]

Mr. Gerry St. Germain (Mission-Port Moody): Mr. Speaker, it took the Government four years to bring this forward. Who does the NDP criticize? It criticizes the provincial Government of British Columbia. I find that to be totally irresponsible. Members of that Party want to adjourn the debate. They are being obstructive in the House for political expedience on a matter affecting the working man whom they profess to protect. The working man would be in a lot of trouble if it were up to the NDP.

We are entering an age of new technology and labour relations. We must be as sure as possible that we have the correct labour code to deal with the problems at hand. We on

Supply

this side of the House are not trying to delay the Bill. We are trying to bring forward the best legislation for the working men and women of the country. Labour and labour-management relations have been a big part of my life. I was a union president and had to sit across the table from management. I was told that there was everything but safety and wage increases for my membership. Later, as a contractor I remembered the lessons of my union days. I had respect, consideration and a good sound communication with the men who worked in my organization.

Fairness should be the hallmark of all labour-management relations. That must be the thrust of labour-management relations and, if I may say so, we require a new labour-management code to establish a new standard of behaviour for both sides. A civilized labour atmosphere is indicative of an advanced civilization.

The Hon. Member for Fraser Valley West (Mr. Wenman) moved a motion concerning the health and safety of Canadian workers, women in the workplace and technological change. Initially I should like to address the area of technological change, its impact upon the youth of the country and the unemployment which has resulted because it was not addressed by the Government opposite. The primary concern of all of us should be the 1.5 million to 2 million unemployed Canadians. The biggest issue facing Canadian today is that of jobs. That should be the concern of every Bill which comes before the House.

We cannot be sure of the real numbers of unemployed, but there are many out there. Unemployment affects nearly every household. It affects my household. I have trained, educated unemployed youth in my home. Canadian workers are out of work not because they do not work hard, not because consumers do not want to purchase the goods and services produced, but because of the disastrous management of the economy by the present Government, the growing national debt and high interest rates. All these factors have diverted attention away from attacking the real problems at hand. Our technology has not advanced with the rest of the world.

● (1630)

Earlier this year I had the privilege of attending the OECD Conference in Paris. Countries with the most civilized labour relations have the least problems. They have addressed the question of technological change. Japan has addressed the problem. It has a labour code and code of ethics which attacks the problems at hand. This Government has done nothing to mitigate the crisis of unemployment. Although the Government denies it is a crisis, especially for the young, there are between 600,000 and 1,000,000 million youth unemployed. If we really check the figures, it would probably be closer to 1.5 million. Because of this despair and frustration, some youth have totally given up looking for jobs.

The Labour Code has not done anything with regard to technological change. The Government has seen fit to shirk its responsibility. Our youth are totally ill-prepared. The Government does not adequately address the issue in Bill C-34. It