

Supply

their homes. At age 19, 20, 25 or 29, they are sitting at home. It is a shame on the Government of Canada and on all of us that we have not been more positive and more creative. That is the challenge which is before us in the election that is to come.

● (1150)

Let us look at some of the areas which need to be addressed. All of us recognize that we must increase productivity and be able to sell our products in international markets. By doing that we will create more jobs and the cycle will be complete. We feel also that productivity is enhanced if the workplace is a healthful workplace. We feel that the legislation which has been brought forward is not adequate to meet the needs of the health and safety of workers. More productivity is lost as a result of industrial accidents than is lost in strikes and work stoppages. We focus on strikes as the problem; however, there is an equal problem in health and safety.

Mr. Kristiansen: Use the word "we" selectively.

Mr. Wenman: Mr. Speaker, I hear a member of the NDP saying "Use the term 'we' selectively". When I use the word "we", I do not mean "we" in terms of myself and the Conservative Party. I mean "we" in terms of myself, the Liberal Government and the NDP Opposition. All of us bear responsibility in this. We all bear responsibility for identifying the importance of health and safety in strong legislation that will give guarantees to our workers, thereby enhancing productivity and the standards and life-styles of Canadians.

We cannot allow the lives of our workers to be jeopardized by occupational health and safety accidents. After we consider all of the technology in the world, what really counts is the individual: How does he feel about himself, his work, and his opportunity? If he is not healthy and lives in constant danger and fear in the workplace, he will not be a productive worker. That is not the kind of society we want.

The number of person-days lost to occupational accidents and illness in the past ten years is double the days lost to work stoppages. The Auditor General was extremely critical in his 1983 report on Labour Canada management of their occupational health and safety programs. In view of that criticism and the criticism of the Opposition, I wonder why the Government has not been able to do better in the legislation which it has brought forward. In 1981 alone 82,000 workers were injured and 18 workers were killed in on-the-job accidents within the jurisdiction of Labour Canada. That is a very small jurisdiction. Those people were hurt, sent home and suffered because of on-the-job activities just in this jurisdiction. That is not good enough.

There is so much that needs to be said about this Bill. In the debate that follows, other speakers from our side will cover women in the workplace, technological change and other areas which are of concern. These areas must be addressed. That is why the Bill must be brought forward for as full a debate as is possible within the time-frame of this House of Commons. Is the Government ready to give one, two, three or four days of debate to jobs and labour in Canada to discuss the problem?

Or does it just want to shove it under the mat or the election rug? Is it willing to go to committee to hear the concerns of Canadians? I hope so—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Guilbault): Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. gentleman but his time has expired. A ten-minute period is now provided to Members either to ask questions or make comments related to the hon. gentleman's remarks. Are there any questions?

Mr. Kristiansen: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Hon. Member, who I understand is the labour spokesman for his caucus, a question. I refer him to the proposition which the House Leader of the New Democratic Party put before the House and the Government House Leader on May 31, 1984, and I quote from the remarks of the NDP House Leader on that date, when he asked the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Pinard):

—I would ask you to seek unanimous consent for leave to introduce the following motion pertaining to the treatment of Bill C-34. If unanimous consent were forthcoming, I would be prepared to move and to support that the Standing Orders be amended by adding immediately following Standing Order 79(1) the following:

79 (1a) The purpose of this Standing Order is to provide for the orderly and timely consideration of Bill C-34, an Act to amend the Canadian Labour Code, and to be finally disposed of no later than June 30th, 1984;

(b) When the House is considering the said legislation for second reading, at the end of one day's debate, all questions necessary to dispose shall be put;

(c) That the said legislation shall be deemed to be returned to the House for report stage and third reading no later than June 28, 1984.

I would like to ask the Hon. Member who has just spoken, as the labour spokesman for the Progressive Conservative Party in this House of Commons, whether he and his Party would give unanimous consent to the support of such a motion so that, despite some of its inadequacies—and any legislation put forth by any Party will have some inadequacies—we may have legislation in both Parts III, IV and V of the Canada Labour Code particularly on occupational health and safety. This would be a vast improvement over the regime which exists today. As well, it will ensure that, regardless of whatever government is elected in the next election, hopefully fewer Canadian workers will die. Will he and his Party give support to such a motion to ensure that we have the legislation prior to the end of this Parliament?

Mr. Wenman: Mr. Speaker, if we could stop playing politics with this issue, from the Minister getting involved, to writing letters beyond the system to the Member proposing amendments to give the kinds of assurances without notice to myself as the official critic or to the House Leader of the Official Opposition or to the Leaders on the other side, if they really meant what they said, they would follow the process of negotiation that is established in this House through our House Leaders. We have honourable and competent House Leaders who are negotiating this process. I would urge them to meet at the first possible opportunity to negotiate among themselves in order that our House Leader can find in good faith if the Government does intend to give one, two, three, four or five days to the House of Commons to debate the