

*Privilege—Mr. McGrath*

This is an extremely serious matter. They ought not to be let off without a proper examination of this principle. The bill should not go forward until the matter is cleared up to the satisfaction of all members and the people they represent.

**Mr. David Crombie (Rosedale):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity of briefly participating in the question of privilege before the House. I should like to deal with this matter and the manner in which it is hurtful to members of my constituency and perhaps others. Obviously I will not go over the ground already covered by other hon. members. I am referring to the longshoremen of the city of Toronto. They will be affected seriously by the legislation and/or the regulation, whichever comes first.

The longshoremen first read about this matter on November 3, 1978, at which time an article appeared in the *Globe and Mail*. In part it read:

Thousands would no longer be insured by the program—for example, the longshoreman who works a few hours on the weekend for extremely high wages.

Shortly after that, the longshoremen were in touch with me. The reason for their particular concern relating to the ongoing process before the House and committee is that there are two ports in the country unlike other ports in terms of the manner in which longshoremen are employed. The ports of Hamilton and Toronto offer opportunities to longshoremen via a variety of employers. The legislation always contemplated one single employer. These ports function with two employer groups, the MEA and the Toronto Harbour Commission of the city of Toronto.

The situation is difficult for longshoremen in Toronto and Hamilton, given the circumstances of trade in those two ports during the last five to seven years, because they cannot receive up to 20 hours' work from one single employer. If this piece of legislation passes, or if the regulation goes through, they will not be insured.

After the longshoremen contacted me, I indicated that the bill had been introduced for second reading, that it was now before committee, and that the opportunity to make their views known would be before the committee. They believed in the process as much as I and felt that it was fair. At the same time as the matter came to committee, I found out that regulation 54 had been revoked. That regulation placed the longshoremen in exactly the same circumstance as the new legislation would have if passed. Not only did they have no opportunity to say anything, but they believed, as most people across the country do, that the idea of legislation before the House is to debate principles, refer it to committee, and allow people affected to say something about it.

As it stands now, the difficulty facing the longshoremen of Toronto is that essentially they are involved in a Catch 22 situation. They cannot speak to the legislation as it stands. They do not want the legislation to pass, particularly respecting clause 2, because it effectively "disinsures" them. To be told that it does not matter whether they come to the committee or whether the legislation passes, that in fact three weeks

[Mr. Rodriguez.]

ago the government passed a regulation "disinsuring" them, abuses the process as it affects them.

It is not merely a question of the privileges of the members of the House. If the privileges mean anything at all, they mean something to the people affected by the legislation passed. The regulation means that the longshoremen in the city of Toronto are no longer able to achieve insurability respecting unemployment insurance. It is not because, as the minister suggested in one of his press releases, that the government is attempting to deal with those who make a lot of money over the weekend. The average wage on an hourly basis for longshoremen in Toronto is \$11,500.

**An hon. Member:** On an hourly basis?

**Mr. Crombie:** Perhaps it is funny to be smart, but if a person has to live on \$11,500—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The hon. member said "on an hourly basis".

**Mr. Crombie:** Obviously no one receives \$11,500 an hour; I assumed hon. members opposite would understand that. Longshoremen receive \$11,500 a year. According to contract, they must be available seven days a week. I am not talking about people who are slacking. I am not talking about people who can make a lot of quick money on the side. I am talking about people with average salaries of \$11,500, people who must be available for seven days a week. Also they work in ports which are not designated as deep water ports. Therefore, their ability to carry out responsibilities as people looking after their families will be non-existent if the regulation or the legislation goes through. They would like to have an opportunity to make that point.

There is only one possible salvation for them. Perhaps an agreement will be reached between the MEA and the Toronto Harbour Commission for an employer of record. I mentioned that to the minister and he indicated that he thought something could be worked out. Given what I have heard today, I suggest it cannot be worked out by January 1, and that is the difficulty.

● (1522)

I conclude by suggesting that anyone who, for the first time, followed through on the problem of a constituent or a large number of people who were affected by a bill referred to a committee and found that it did not matter because in fact there was a regulation which covered it and, therefore, the people who were affected by it had no effective say, would consider that as not a very good introduction for someone handling the problem, such as is the case with the longshoremen, who were involved in this sort of thing before.

**Mr. Donald W. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich):** Mr. Speaker, my intervention will be short. I did not intend to intervene, but when listening to the debate I noted the coming together of three sets of coincidences which made me feel that my colleague, the hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath),