

So all these people lost their jobs and problems arose. It happened in April. Some people have drawn unemployment insurance benefits only some three weeks ago. So I made many representations to get the Unemployment Insurance Commission to understand those things, namely that they were no longer working in that plant since the employer had shut down. They waited for all the machinery to be taken out, they had to see it done themselves, to make sure that there were witnesses, otherwise they were not ready to pay out the benefits even if some among these people had worked elsewhere on other sites and had accumulated contributions. Yet they were told: In the first place, the decision taken following the loss of your job in a collective dispute contributes to maintaining your status as non-eligible for these benefits.

The same thing is happening at Napoléon Transport Ltd., at Rivière-du-Loup. There was a lock-out there. The fact is that since last spring, following a communication with a senior Unemployment Insurance Commission officer, there may be one of these guys who is being paid unemployment insurance benefits but he did have to wait for two months. He cannot get anything. He cannot get welfare benefits because as he is told: You have stopped working because there was a labour dispute. This is true in his case, but he was not even unionized. He worked there some three weeks, and then became a victim of local developments. He worked three months elsewhere, for three different employers, yet the Unemployment Insurance Commission told him that he had lost his first job because of a labour conflict. That is the kind of nonsense which should not happen as often as it does now.

There are cases when a strike can be considered as reasonable and acceptable but it is seldom so. Often, if all avenues of negotiation were explored, a strike could be avoided. The time when the boss was almighty and kept his employees in check through fear, threat or blackmail is over. Today management is used to negotiating and even if it finds it sometimes a bit unpleasant, it recognizes that it cannot escape such obligations. However, when it sees the union making unreasonable demands, management immediately reacts by refusing to make any concessions at all. This kind of attitude is very frustrating for union officials and that is when they start being demagogical before their members by calling for union solidarity. You can imagine what happens. How do the workers react? Their blood boils, their pride is hurt and then they are ready for any act of violence. I must say with regret that this has happened in many places, particularly in the province of Quebec, because I know what happened there.

When the Minister of Labour tabled in the House this general law to amend the Labour Code, he stated that these amendments were an integral part of a large program launched by the Department of Labour to improve working conditions generally and strengthen the collective bargaining process and the industrial relations system. He also said that, besides reflecting general improvement in labour, collective agreements and provincial labour legislation, this major review of the Canadian Labour Code also corrected some problems resulting from its application. That bill could constitute a

### *Canada Labour Code*

declaration of workers' rights even though it is far from being complete. This legislation affects about 550,000 private sector workers under federal jurisdiction.

For some activities such as railways, air transport, banks, trucking, broadcasting and television, grain handling, communications and harbours, I noted that some amendments to this legislation would oblige unions to provide financial statements to their members and guarantee fair and objective procedures for job offers in hiring halls. We should keep that in mind as well. In other words, the government should not unconsciously contribute to creating problems and then admit that it cannot solve them.

I have already given examples of things we should never have to do. I refer to legislation ordering striking workers back to work after the passage of legislation giving them the right to strike. Those are examples of obvious inconsistencies which should be avoided at all costs. I approve this bill on the whole because it includes much that is good. However, it should have been passed years ago, but since it has now been introduced it is never too late to act. Therefore, I support its contents on the whole because I see many improvements. Let us hope that amendments brought to the Canada Labour Code will contribute to a healthier climate and restore harmony in employer-employee relations.

● (1612)

[English]

**Mr. Doug Neil (Moose Jaw):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a few brief comments regarding one aspect of this bill that was covered earlier by the hon. member for Dauphin (Mr. Ritchie), and that is the way the amendments will affect grain handling in western Canada. First of all, I should like to put on the record a letter I received from the manager of one of the elevators in my constituency which sums up very well the feelings of many managers of elevator companies on the prairies. This manager writes as follows:

I have been notified that the Canada Labour is planning to enforce an eight-hour day, forty-hour week on us effective August 1, 1978.

I work for Pioneer Grain Co. Ltd. In my personal feelings this is going to damage our free enterprise. We will not have the incentive program that we have now. During harvest it will be a hardship on farmers if we have to close at six o'clock. I am sure the farmers will not approve of (an) eight-hour day in harvest.

Therefore, I'm against any action taken to control our working hours.

Two or three weeks ago I had occasion to attend the annual meeting of the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool. The minister in charge of the Canadian Wheat Board addressed the meeting. Following his address, he indicated he was prepared to answer any questions that might be put to him and one or two individuals expressed the concerns they and the wheat pool had regarding the legislation.

● (1622)

Grain handling on the prairies is different from the usual type of industry. If the elevator agents or managers are restricted to a 40-hour week with eight hours' overtime, the system will just not function properly. The sale of grain is subject to quotas and delivery depends on those quotas; it