

Industrial Relations

Mr. Fleming thereupon moved for leave to introduce Bill No. 248, respecting the taxation of estates.

Motion agreed to and bill read the first time.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS**PROVISION OF ANNUAL VACATIONS WITH PAY FOR EMPLOYEES IN FEDERAL WORKS**

The house resumed, from Thursday, December 19, consideration of the motion of Mr. Starr for the second reading of Bill No. 16, to provide for annual vacations with pay for employees in public works, undertakings and businesses.

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I believe that when this bill was last before the house on December 19 it was my privilege to adjourn the debate on the motion for second reading.

It is not my intention to speak at any length because there is really just one point that remains at issue so far as this bill is concerned. On the assumption that second reading of this bill may be reached tonight, and a decision taken on it, I propose to say something which will be a relief to the mind of the Minister of Public Works. It has been a source of some concern to him for a number of months that there have been two bills on the order paper having to do with vacations with pay; and I trust that the minister agrees with me as to the ruling given by Mr. Speaker that until a decision has been taken on one of these bills it is in order for both of them to be debated. However, I will give him the assurance that if a decision is taken tonight on the government bill I will not try on a subsequent occasion at this session to call my bill. It would then be out of order.

As I say, I wish to deal only with one point—the main point of difference between government Bill No. 16 and my Bill No. 2. Incidentally, my bill was before the house on previous occasions and the last time it came to a vote it had the support of the Minister of Public Works (Mr. Green) and ten other members of the present cabinet. Of course, at that time they were sitting on the opposition side of the house.

I point out to them that what they voted for on that occasion was a bill the purpose of which was to provide two weeks' annual holidays with pay to employees who come under federal labour jurisdiction after one year's employment. The bill that is now before us in the name of the Minister of Labour (Mr. Starr) is a desirable piece of legislation. It is time we had legislation of this kind on the statute books of Canada and it will have our support. We regret, however,

[Mr. Nicholson.]

that, having gone this far, the government has short changed the workers of this country who come under federal labour jurisdiction by providing that the two weeks' annual holidays with pay stipulated in this legislation are to be enjoyed only after two years' continuous employment. I recognize that there is a provision that in the case of those who have had only one year's continuous employment one week's holiday with pay is provided. We think, however, that the provision suggested in my bill, which is in line with the request made by the Canadian Congress of Labour when it appeared before the government of Canada on October 21, 1957, is one to which the Minister of Labour should still give consideration.

This question has been debated, of course, off and on during the session and I believe that the nub of the matter came out in an exchange that took place between my good friend the hon. member for Brandon-Souris (Mr. Dinsdale) and me when this question arose: Is an annual holiday with pay a matter of right or is it a reward? It was my contention that holidays with pay should be a matter of right. My hon. friends on the other side were agreeing that we should have annual holidays with pay. After all, they must take that position because the government is advocating that principle in this bill. However, they made the point that two weeks should not be accorded to employees until they have demonstrated two years of loyalty to a particular employer. In answer to my question my friend the hon. member for Brandon-Souris said that it was both, it was partly a matter of right and partly a matter of reward. We feel that two weeks' holiday with pay should be just as much a matter of right to a person who has put in a year's work with an employer, if that is his first year's work, as it is if it is a year later on in the employ of that particular employer. We feel that the concept that what an employer does for his employee is a reward for faithful service is the old master-servant concept. That has gone by the board and what we should be dealing with today is the question as to what belongs to employees as a matter of right.

It is on that basis that we, in giving our support to the minister's bill, urge him to consider even yet making the amendments that would be necessary—and they are extremely simple—to change this bill so that two weeks' annual holidays with pay would be enjoyed by workers under federal labour jurisdiction after one year's service. We find it difficult to understand, now that the government has gone this far, has been prepared to recognize the validity of the