

Labour Conditions

at this time might be more properly made when we are in committee.

Mr. Canelon: I know that, sir, but I was hoping that the clause could be changed before we get to it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: If the minister speaks now, he will close the debate.

Hon. A. J. MacEachen (Minister of Labour): I should like to thank hon. members who have taken part in this debate, Mr. Speaker, and who have been so generous in their acceptance of the principle of a national Canadian labour standards code. I have listened with great interest to the contributions made by all hon. members and I thank them for the way in which they have dealt with the bill on second reading and for the many thoughtful suggestions that have been put forward.

The hon. gentleman who has just taken his seat, the hon. member for Winnipeg North (Mr. Orlikow), has referred to the role of the late Mackenzie King in the development of the labour policy of the Liberal party. No more apt reference could be made, particularly on a bill of this kind, than the reference made to Mr. Mackenzie King because of the impetus he gave to the development of a fair wage policy in Canada. This resulted from his examination of the garment industry in Toronto. It was because he became disturbed by the disgraceful conditions that prevailed there that subsequently, through the co-operation of his friend, Mr. Mulock, there was inserted in later government contracts a fair wage clause. Hon. members can make this point at a later time, perhaps when we are amending the Fair Wages and Hours of Labour Act.

It might be of interest for hon. members to review, as I have attempted to do, the development and application of this fair wage policy to government contracts. In a sense the application, with the exception of the construction industry, has not gone very far beyond the principles that were applied by Mr. King in his early days as deputy minister of labour. I am not, therefore, defensive about Mr. King and his development of labour policy because I think this bill we are considering is, if not a close, at least a clear historical link to the development of the Canadian labour department.

Mr. Knowles: His ghost has been bothering you.

Mr. MacEachen: No, there had been no danger in that respect.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker.]

As I indicated, I should like to deal with a number of points that were made by hon. members during the debate on second reading.

It is the intention of the government to proceed with a bill in the field of occupational safety, or safety in employment. I have learned the lesson connected with indicating deadlines for the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), so I intend to resist the temptation of establishing a deadline for the safety in employment legislation, but it is now being drafted and will be proceeded with as soon as possible.

Mr. Knowles: Will that be at this session?

Mr. MacEachen: The application of standards arising from this particular bill will be incorporated, so far as certain categories of federal contracts are concerned, in amendments to the Fair Wages and Hours of Labour Act. While hon. members have drawn attention to the substantial impact this bill will have on the classes of employment directly affected, in my judgment the application of certain of these standards to federal government contracts will also be very considerable in certain parts of the country and that, of course, will become clear if we have an opportunity this session, as I hope we might, to deal with the amendments to the Fair Wages and Hours of Labour Act.

I can understand the concern of the hon. member for Yukon (Mr. Nielsen), the hon. member for Northwest Territories (Mr. Rhéaume) and other hon. members, that labour standards be applied to these two territories. It is not a fact, as has been stated, that this bill is inapplicable to employment in the Yukon and Northwest Territories. This bill will apply to all the federal businesses that are listed operating in the Northwest Territories and the Yukon, such as railways, and all the classes that are listed in clause 3.

Mr. Nielsen: Why are they singled out then?

Mr. MacEachen: This bill will apply to all the federal businesses and undertakings operating in the Northwest Territories and the Yukon. What is excluded are those businesses or activities that are normally under provincial jurisdiction. These are all that are excluded from the operation of this bill.

Mr. Nielsen: Would the minister permit me to suggest to him that perhaps he does not appreciate the fact that the territorial administration of the Yukon is on all fours with provincial administration, so that there would appear to be no reason for excluding the Yukon, and I believe also the Northwest