

However, I have had a brief discussion with a representative of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association and we hope to be able to sit down with this association later this month to discuss the program more fully. I know that my colleague, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde), is himself planning to meet with certain management associations and national organizations to discuss the details of this new program.

[English]

Mr. Jarvis: Mr. Speaker, I would hope that consultation might take place with associations representing small business, because it seems to me that if this plan is to become successful, one of the targets for the plan would likely be in the small business sector as compared to larger manufacturers and processors.

My principal concern with the Budget dealt with the section in which the Minister dealt with containing inflation. He talked about the potential for strikes in the Public Service and indicated that his Government would be willing to ask Parliament to legislate wage settlements in the face of lengthy strikes. That causes me some concern, and I believe it would likely cause the Minister some concern. He has not direct responsibility but certainly he should be concerned in this area.

We are the least able institution, in my view, to write a collective agreement. That should be the responsibility of union and employer. I am very concerned to see in the Budget that one particular sentence, particularly the words "to legislate a wage settlement", because as the Minister of Labour (Mr. Ouellet) well knows, in Parliament we could end a strike without rewriting a collective agreement.

It seems to me his colleague, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde), has not looked at that option, and I hate to do it at the best of times, although I know it is essential from time to time. He seems to indicate in his Budget that he would prefer the House to rewrite the collective agreement as compared to going only the half step of ending a labour dispute in order that the parties, under whatever vehicle we may choose to give them, could continue to discharge their responsibility, which is to write the new collective agreement. I would appreciate the Minister's comments on that.

[Translation]

Mr. Ouellet: Mr. Speaker, with regard to the Hon. Member's first suggestion to the effect that we should consult with the small business associations, I can assure him that this shall indeed be considered and that such consultations certainly will take place. I think that this is a great idea and that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde) was also thinking about this when he referred to consultations.

On the other hand, concerning the Hon. Member's comments about the possibility that the Canadian Parliament might legislate a collective agreement, I hope that what the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde) said about this in his budget was hypothetical, and that, in the future, collective bargaining within the Public Service can lead to an agreement

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signed at the bargaining table by both parties and that what the Minister of Finance was saying will not happen.

● (1140)

[English]

Mr. Murphy: Mr. Speaker, my question deals with some of the statements the Minister made. In discussing the Budget, he referred to the Government's six and five program, a program introduced without any consultation with labour groups. That was admitted by the Minister responsible. It seems that when the Government wants to do something which adversely affects labour, such as the six and five program which prevented unions from negotiating protection for part-time workers or negotiating packages to help people at the lower end of the economic scale, the Government acts quickly. The Budget introducing the six and five program was introduced in the House on June 28, I believe, and the legislation was ready as soon as the Budget debate was finished. However, when it comes to proposals which will enhance labour, it is never a program but always a study. It is always something down the road, not something the Government is ready to act upon. Under those circumstances, can you blame organized labour for being skeptical?

While the Minister is at it, perhaps he could explain why it takes so long for the Government to introduce legislation which will change Part IV of the Canada Labour Code to protect workers' safety, indeed their lives, in the workplace?

[Translation]

Mr. Ouellet: Mr. Speaker, I can assure the Hon. Member that the government will not be dragging its feet as far as setting up a profit-sharing scheme is concerned. I suggest it would have been improper to announce forthwith such a scheme without first involving both employers and employees in the preparation and development of this profit-sharing scheme. The Hon. Member will certainly agree, therefore, that it was worth seeking the involvement of the interested parties as well as their co-operation in devising methods and mechanisms to operate this scheme. I can assure him that we will make haste and implement this program as soon as our consultations with employers and employees are completed.

As to his remarks concerning amendments to Part IV of the Canada Labour Code, I can assure the Hon. Member that the government has every intention of introducing the relevant bill at the first opportunity in March.

Mr. Lambert: Getting back to the issue raised by my colleague the Hon. Member for Perth (Mr. Jarvis), Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the minister whether, judging from the few remarks which we have heard so far, the program which the government has announced does not seem to differ much from the programs which have been in existence for a great many years on a voluntary basis. Now, has the government chosen to implement this program to demonstrate its gratitude to his colleague the Hon. Member who has since