

Department of Labour Act

This is a provincial matter, but look at the number of jobs lost to working men. When one group of working men take an attitude like that and stop progress, it is a perfect case for an inquiry by a federal organization. Make it known to the people of Saskatchewan that the labour people across Canada are backing the labour people of Saskatchewan in seeing that opportunities are given.

I do not want to bore the House or take the time of the House by going through all the things that could be done by an active group under this provision where they shall make inquiries, not inquiries to cover up but inquiries to let the people know there are opportunities for them if they put political pressure on their city MPs and get them off their seats and moving.

If the minister would take this legislation, which looks innocent enough and has been sitting around for a couple of years waiting to be passed, and really roll in his department, he would scare the devil out of all the other ministers. He could make a deal with the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) to join forces and scare the daylight out of those guys. The Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) would not be able to do a thing with him. Once you do something worth while which has the support of all the labour people, the Prime Minister would not dare do a thing with you.

I gave the same advice to the Minister of Agriculture on interest rates. "Go ahead and do it, you have the power, they won't throw you out". The minister has these opportunities in his hands, backed up by legislation, and they should be used. It all depends on the will and the spirit of the minister who holds the portfolio whether anything is done.

I want to close by saying that the failure of governments in not having come up with a clear, direct industrial strategy for the next 30, 40, 50 years is a failure that we must all share responsibility for, but most of the responsibility falls on those sitting in the seats of office now.

I hope the minister will set up this group which he should have in his department, that he will expect them at the end of the year when he gives his report to Parliament to list all the questions that they have inquired into and their recommendations, and that he personally will make these things public to the labour unions across Canada so that the work force can be organized behind the minister and put pressure on other MPs to get things done to help us provide more jobs for the people of this country.

Hon. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, may I at the outset say how much I welcome many of the things that have just been said by the hon. member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain (Mr. Hamilton). There was one spot where he might have left out a couple of sentences, but to the extent that he was pleading for an industrial strategy, for progress and development in the creation of jobs and pushing this country ahead, it was a good speech. In fact, it was so good that I urge him to make it again when the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Axworthy) is before us, when the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr.

Gray) has the floor, as well as the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen) and the Minister of State for Science and Technology (Mr. Roberts). These are the ministries concerned about that sort of thing.

I would be very grateful if the Minister of Labour (Mr. Regan) had the credentials to go into that field, but for the most part his job is that of a referee. It is not his job to find jobs; that is the job of the Minister of Employment and Immigration. It is not his job to create jobs; that is the job of the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce and so on. His job is to referee labour relations.

The hon. member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain may have read a little too much into the capacity this minister has to launch inquiries. However, it was a good speech. Sometimes Friday afternoon is a good time to get a speech on record or at least to rehearse it. I urge him to make it again to ministers who have the key responsibility in terms of an industrial strategy and the economic development of the country.

With respect to the bill that is before us, I am still against it. I have been against it every time it has come up. At this stage of the game, since the *Labour Gazette* has not been published for two and a half years and this bill has gone through almost all stages, there is not much point in trying to block or defeat the bill this afternoon.

● (1450)

I was interested in the question the hon. member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain asked about the retroactivity of this bill. He wondered whether that meant some legitimizing was being done of money that had been spent in the meantime. The minister replied that that was not what it was doing, but it was to legitimize the way the department has broken the law since January 1, 1979, by not publishing the *Labour Gazette*. There is no doubt that the word "shall" was there in former Section 4 of the Department of Labour Act. It says "shall issue at least once in every month a publication to be known as the *Labour Gazette*."

The minister says that because the department thought the bill was going to be passed, the department ceased publishing. What about some law enforcement officer over there checking to see what happens when the department breaks the law, whether the minister knows about it or not? I know at this stage the *Labour Gazette* had died and we are now legitimizing it to death and, as the minister said so honestly, the purpose of the language in the new Section 4 is to mollify those of us who do not like the *Labour Gazette* being abolished and to tell us that we are going to make it a legal requirement that there be a collection of information such as the *Labour Gazette* was publishing.

I recognize that times change and that there are different and sometimes better ways of dealing with things. The minister pointed out that there are now many publications which cover different aspects of labour relations and labour matters. I point out to him, as was suggested by one of my colleagues in the committee, that smaller trade unions, or locals of unions across the country particularly, have some difficulty in getting