

Labour Conditions

low minimum. The rate for women laundry workers only is 55 cents an hour. In Nova Scotia it is \$21.60 per week in major centres. I understand there are hearings at the present time with a view to establishing a new rate. In New Brunswick, the rate is 60 cents per hour.

These minimum rates present a hodge-podge picture across Canada which, as I say, in the long run creates depressed areas. This creates the situation mentioned by Professor Grauer of competition between industries in the various provinces. I hope that while we have now or we will soon have a Canada labour standards code, the minister and the government, and this parliament as a whole, will try to see to it that we do really expand the field where uniform standards can be established across Canada. This would not prevent provincial autonomy in connection with improving standards; it would not take away responsibility for safety precautions; it would not take administrative responsibility away from the provinces, but it would establish certain basic standards which I suggest would help to deal with the pockets of poverty to which the hon. member for Hamilton East referred a few minutes ago.

I do not want to repeat what has been said by other hon. members. However, there is one feature of this legislation I wish to mention, and that is the question of vacations with pay for people who have been employed for a considerable period. This is something to which the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) referred.

The bill falls short of the standard proposed by the Canadian Labour Congress, and in my view falls short of a reasonable standard. Why shouldn't employees who have been employed for a considerable period—I do not intend to stipulate a period but I would like to see it a short period—receive three weeks vacation with pay in this day and age of automation? I know as a professional man that I started getting three weeks vacation with pay after one year in the office in which I worked, and I cannot understand why those who spent a long period in industry—after 30, 20, or ten years of steady employment—should have their vacations cut short.

It has always been demonstrated that reasonably long vacations produce better workers and add to the productivity of industry. In this age of automation, when experts talk about the fact that they will have to pay us for not working, it seems ridiculous that we should be laying down a standard for Canada

[Mr. Brewin.]

that does not recognize a minimum of at least three weeks vacation with pay for those who have been in steady employment in industry.

Many of the other things I would like to say can be said more appropriately at committee stage. There are various details we intend to discuss, but one matter I would like to mention now is the question of the regulations, because the success of so much of this bill will depend on the regulations. Much will depend on the exemptions which may be granted by the regulations, or upon the deferments that may be granted by them, and I urge the minister to make the details of the regulations available to the house as soon as possible. I know there are provisions for some of the regulations to appear in the Canada Gazette, but any hon. member who has tried to find things from the Canada Gazette knows how inadequate a means of publicity it is.

Under clause 51 there is provision that upon the submission "of any person" the minister may defer or exclude the application of part I of the bill, dealing with hours of work, etc. I am not suggesting this is not entirely necessary, but I am wondering why it would not be possible to ensure, by some specific provision, that before this is done adequate notice be given to the employees who might be affected, or to their unions, so that they too can attend and make submissions. Presumably in the first instance "any person" would be an employer, and I think it would be unfortunate if under clause 51, and also under clause 52, submissions were made by one party without the other parties involved being notified. In that respect I think the bill could be improved.

In summary, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say once more that we welcome this legislation, in our opinion long delayed but welcome none the less. There are specific improvements we would like to see made to it, and we urge that the measure be regarded merely as a start. In this age of automation any standards we adopt today will be inadequate shortly hereafter. We should be constantly pressing forward to improve our standards in this field of labour legislation, and by doing so we would benefit not only those directly affected but also the community as a whole.

No one benefits from depressed conditions in industry, whether directly involved in industry or not. A community that has enough sense in this age of automation to shorten hours, to provide adequate vacations, to provide adequate minimum wages and does so