

Canada Labour (Standards) Code

Labour approves the vacation provisions of the agreement.

Under the Canada Labour (Standards) Code an employee is entitled to two weeks' vacation with pay after a year's service. In New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Ontario and Quebec the vacation with pay to which a worker is entitled under the law is one week after a year of employment. In Alberta, British Columbia and Manitoba it is two weeks after a year of employment. The Saskatchewan act provides for an annual paid vacation of two weeks after each of the first four years of service and for three weeks after the fifth year and each year thereafter.

The period of five years of employment with the same employer necessary for an employee to qualify for three weeks' vacation may be continuous or may be made up of accumulated years provided that no break in employment exceeds six months, 182 days. The Saskatchewan act also provides that a system of cumulative vacation may be established by regulation, under which an employee may by agreement with his employer and with the approval of the minister postpone one week of his vacation each year for a period not exceeding four years.

Our Canada Labour (Standards) Code seems to be working very well, and though there have been some deferrals, particularly with reference to hours of work, these deferrals have been relatively few and I have every reason to believe that these problems will be equitably solved within a reasonable period of time.

In this bill the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre has seen fit to reduce the length of service from five years to three. If he had been consistent he would have left it at five years, in which case I believe it would draw greater sympathy. We of course agree that there are minimum standards and that the federal government has a responsibility to introduce legislation to see that labour receives fair treatment at all levels, and even though the standards may not affect all the people in the country the government's responsibility is to set standards that should be followed. Provincial governments, as I have indicated, have the power to set their own standards and nearly all provinces have done so with respect to vacations with pay.

• (4:20 p.m.)

Labour naturally feels that in periods of prosperity it is the time to seek gains, to catch up with what it regards as its legitimate objectives. Being human, we should not be surprised at this. We should, rather, be grateful to the hon. member if in some cases he did not persist in unrealistic demands at times when the Canadian economy cannot afford it. The Canadian working force—that is, the average Canadian worker—is well aware of the state of the economy and workers are encouraged to seek their share of the general prosperity. I do not blame them for this.

I do not deny that it is within the authority of the federal government to legislate on labour matters, which includes regulations with respect to vacations with pay. And I am all for it, especially since we live at a time

[Mr. Badanai.]

when technological advances in all fields of human endeavour leave our people with more time for leisure and recreation; at a time when we stand at the very threshold of even greater potential that will produce more with less work and, consequently, more time to spare.

I do not deny that a prolonged vacation is desirable and useful. In fact, I admit that it is increasingly useful in view of the technological advances in industry, in manufacturing and in the offices of the nation; and the time may be near when we will be able to implement measures envisaged in this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Richard): Order, please. The hon. member for Sarnia-Lambton (Mr. Cullen).

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): The hon. member is a bit early.

Mr. Jack Cullen (Sarnia-Lambton): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is a bit loud; I can hear him away down here at the end of the House without benefit of a microphone. The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) has been here for a considerable time and has fantastic experience. He seems to have the happy knack of taking the attitude that if you agree with him you are on the side of the angels; if you "love something to death" that is not good, and if you are opposed to him you are not singing with the angels but are probably in a different choir. I have watched the hon. member work through the question period, notices of motions and private members' bills. Much of what he does is good because it prods what he may think is the sleeping giant, namely, the government. But sometimes he holds out what I feel might be false hopes to the general public. It is at times like these when we feel we should participate or perhaps draw rein.

Mr. Speaker, during World War I there was a group known affectionately as the Old Contemptibles. I am not suggesting the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre fits that particular phraseology but I suggest it might be more appropriate, when I hear him talk from time to time, to refer to him as the "old predictable." I might even be kind enough to remove the adjective "old". I say "predictable" because the hon. member, in respect of bills, motions, questions or suggestions, invariably takes a piece of legislation that is already on the books and suggests changes such as more money being spent, longer or shorter qualifying periods depending on which happens to suit the mood, longer and larger benefits, higher standards, and so on.

In so far as the hon. member is concerned, he is on pretty safe ground by taking this approach because he and his party, at least until this time, have no financial accountability to this House. His party does not have to raise the revenue to pay for the kind of things that he would like to see. Quite frankly, many of the things he would like to see I would like to see also.

Another somewhat unhappy response to some of the hon. member's suggestions—I am not suggesting it is true of this one—is that they fit a particular mould and hold out a kind of false hope to individuals who, when they