

Adjournment Debate

I never said the nation's capital must be in Ontario. I said this nation has one capital. That capital happens to be Ottawa. Ottawa happens to be in Ontario. So I invite the federal parties to join us and other parties by bringing their headquarters to Ottawa.

Recently there was a property for sale. The NDP was selling its national headquarters. I hope one of the parties will take advantage of that and purchase the property so it could be here.

I have one more point. If anybody is worried about our representation to this House, we won election in October 1993 by 41 or 42 per cent. Today we are 60 per cent. Obviously we are doing something right. People in the west, people in the east and in central Canada approve of our position. We are very happy for it. We thank them and will continue to provide the best government we have ever had in the last 127 years.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): We have closed debate on this private members' bill. If there should be any doubt or questions in your mind, we followed Standing Order 44(2) and (3) giving the final word or the final reply to the mover of the motion. Consequently the order is dropped from the Order Paper, pursuant to Standing Order 96(1).

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

• (1845)

[*Translation*]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

CANADA LABOUR CODE

Mr. Bernard St-Laurent (Manicouagan): Mr. Speaker, on January 14, I denounced the fact that more than 300 employees in my riding were locked out by a mining company which was deliberately using overlapping federal and provincial jurisdiction in Quebec on the issue of anti-scab legislation.

Quebec law forbids the use of strikebreakers, but federal law does not cover this very important aspect of collective bargaining and allows companies to hire strikebreakers to do the work done by those with whom the companies do not want to negotiate.

I have already referred to my statement on January 14. However, on April 21, I asked the Prime Minister in this House whether he agreed that the lack of federal anti-scab legislation was the reason negotiations with the companies were deteriorating, in particular with QNS & L at the time, which was negotiating with the union in my riding. On April 21, I did not get an answer.

However, on May 5, concerning the same question, the parliamentary secretary responsible for the issue was kind enough to answer me, but in his answer he said that more than 90 per cent of collective bargaining negotiations are settled without a work stoppage, so a law was not really necessary.

An anti-scab law is not made for the 90 per cent of cases where things go well but for the 10 per cent where things break down and the danger in the negotiations rises enormously.

On April 29, the President of the Public Service Alliance, Mr. Bean, wrote to me that he agreed. According to Mr. Bean, the Public Service Alliance of Canada recognizes the importance of this kind of legislation, and as it found in Quebec, which has some people experienced in this area, it feels this bill will have a beneficial impact on labour management relations in the federal public service. That is quite a testimonial.

On June 17 at a regional meeting of the Steelworkers Union in Sept-Îles, delegates demanded anti-strikebreaking provisions that would apply to federal jobs. Regional co-ordinator Jean-Claude Degrasse said that the harsh conflict to which his members were exposed following the lock-out at QNS&L—I referred to this in my first example, January 14 in Sept-Îles—demonstrates the urgent need for anti-strikebreaking legislation. The company's use of strikebreakers disturbed the industrial peace that had lasted for 16 years, since 1978. The union's demand is supported by the entire population of Sept-Îles.

Quebecers working under federal jurisdiction and all Canadian workers are affected by this serious gap in the labour code. The government has a national responsibility to provide for healthy labour relations. It is in the regulations.

On June 21, I presented a petition signed by many people who asked for the introduction of anti-strikebreaking legislation at the federal level, in order to do something about labour relations in the case of the 10 per cent where things do not always work out.

Today, I repeat my question because I feel I was not given a satisfactory answer. I hope to get one, however, and my question is this: Does the minister intend to introduce in this House amendments to the Canada Labour Code and the Public Service Staff Relations Act that will bring employees under the jurisdiction of the Public Service Alliance of Canada, and introduce anti-strikebreaking provisions at all federal levels, in order to improve labour relations which are so important to the well-being of this country.

[*English*]

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development): Mr. Speaker, the question of restricting the use of replacement workers during legal work stoppages raises a number of complex issues, includ-