

court decision which refused to acknowledge their right to be recognized under the Canada Labour Code. The court stood by the federal Government, but the employees have now served notice of an appeal of that judgment in the Supreme Court of Canada. Passage of this legislation will automatically annul the appeal action which has been launched; the court will not hear the case. In a preliminary decision the court set aside and reserved judgment on hearing that appeal. If this legislation is approved in the House, we will have denied Hill employees the most basic right of any Canadian citizen—the right to take his or her case to the highest court in the land. Surely that is no example for the Government of Canada to set. Even if the Government is convinced it is right, in the final analysis due process must be followed, and due process is not followed when an appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada is ignored by Parliament in passing legislation in advance of the court's decision on the appeal which has been launched.

The second reason the piece of legislation should be set aside, even though it is a step in the right direction, is the implications, the Government of Canada will see when it has examined the situation. For example, what about the implications of Air Canada going to an American contractor rather than a Canadian contractor because it knows that Americans pay 67 per cent less and therefore it can get its service cheaper? What are the implications of that kind of activity increasing? What are the implications of the situation like the Gainers strike in Alberta? It is not a dispute between Peter Pocklington and a group of employees in that particular plant. It has become a symbol. If it is not resolved in a civilized and responsible manner, where both sides compromise, as should always occur in any negotiation, that strike will mark the beginning of terrible labour strife in Canada.

In that environment the federal Government should make a statement which sets a responsible example and shows the importance it places upon the value of its employees. Let the federal Government make a statement which recognizes that its employees are more than just widgets in the inventory of the federal Government's resources. Let it show that they are more than just part of the equipment around here. Let it make a statement which recognizes that its employees are Canadian men and women who deserve the dignity of a collective bargaining process similar to that being offered to employees elsewhere in the country.

I pray Hon. Members opposite will heed these words of brilliant wisdom which I have uttered on behalf of employees who have quietly and unashamedly asked that they be treated no better or no worse than any other citizen of Canada.

Mr. Baker: Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Hon. Member a question. It concerns people who come under the Public Service Alliance of Canada and have contracts with the federal Government. If they are covered by a union, one would expect that employees of the federal Government, either directly or indirectly, would have some rights. However, in the case of Cyril Pynn in Grand Falls who had a federal contract and came under PSAC, he was laid off with two weeks' notice.

Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act

I realize the Hon. Member for Humber—Port au Port—St. Barbe (Mr. Tobin) represents Corner Brook. The name I just mentioned was that of a gentleman in my riding who had an agreement with the Government under the Public Service Alliance of Canada. It is what the Government calls a term employee contract. Such contracts are always renewed after six months under the PSAC. I just tossed out that name. I should like to ask the Hon. Member if he has received any such telephone calls. I have not alerted him to the fact that I would ask this question, but I would bet my bottom dollar that he knows what I am talking about. Has he received any such notification from a constituent working for the federal Government in Corner Brook, coming under the Public Service Alliance of Canada, and being heaved out the door with two weeks' notice because of a slippery little clause in the contract? I should like to ask him whether he has any such people in his riding. If so, will he inform the House under what branch of the federal Government was this PSAC employee employed?

● (2000)

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, it appears the Member when he was speaking earlier said that this mentality of the federal Government of treating people like widgets is spreading at an alarming rate. Not only has the Member heard from Cyril Pinn in the community of Grand Falls but I have heard from several individuals in the community of Cornerbrook who have been treated in a similar fashion. I have heard from one individual who had been employed in a term position with the federal Government for the better part of two decades who was summarily dismissed by the Government of Canada from his job as a cleaner, cleaning federal buildings, because the Government decided that, under the same escape clause, it could get under contract an employee for slave wages to do the same job as did this gentleman, who had a family and a household to support. The Government summarily dismissed him and tendered the cleaning job out to contractors who hire people at a salary of about 40 per cent less. They were kind enough to tell the gentleman as he was on the way out of the door that he could always apply for the job at 40 per cent less wages.

The other case I have heard about is that of someone who was summarily dismissed, effective on July 1, the day we celebrate Canada Day, the day we take pause from our work and labours to contemplate the riches, the generosity and the values of this country, that day that has been set aside as appreciation day for all that this country has offered us. On that day, Mr. Speaker, an employee of Employment and Immigration, the job creation branch in my riding—think about it and imagine the irony—told an employee that effective the day on which he would normally celebrate, normally ponder, normally give thanks for all this country has given him, he is summarily, on a few weeks' notice, picked up and, as we say in Newfoundland, by the scruff of his neck and the slack of his pants flung out the door—a unionized employee. The Member asks whether the problem is spreading. The answer is yes.