

Vacation Leave Bill

people who work a given number of hours receive the vacation that is due them; that productivity in Canada is stepped up; and that we are all able to enjoy a much rosier economic picture than is in view at this time.

Mr. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, perhaps the most qualified people to speak on the advantages of a three-week vacation are the members of this house who have just enjoyed one. Indeed, they might add to what has already been said about the advantage of having three weeks instead of two, because if we had only two weeks we would have returned here a week ago. I think we might also relate the question of holidays to the question of productivity. I am not so sure that in embarking upon this type of analysis I would agree with the conclusion expressed by the previous speaker.

This subject is certainly one which has engaged the attention of people throughout the world. Perhaps hon. members might be interested in a few remarks which were made 14 years ago in Geneva on the occasion of the 37th session of the International Labour Conference by one of the delegates who gave a brief analysis of what, in his opinion, an annual paid holiday meant. He said:

There is no doubt that annual paid holidays have biological, social and economic objectives. First, they enable the worker to recuperate psychologically and physiologically, after his hard year's work. Secondly, holidays enable him to change his surroundings and engage in cultural recreation, sport or travel; this is socially useful as well as providing a solution for the fatigue problem, for rest without change is not sufficient for him to recover his strength and his ability to do his job. This brings me to the economic objective, for the holiday enables the worker to recover his productive power.

However, scientific experiments have shown that in order to achieve these objects it is necessary that the holiday should not be less than two weeks, for if it is shorter the worker will return to his employment without having recovered his biological balance.

On that occasion the convention endorsed and ratified the principle of two weeks' holiday after one year of employment. As I say, this was 14 years ago at a time when automation was perhaps just beginning to make itself felt.

The bill as placed before the house by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) is one which perhaps deserves thorough analysis, if only for the reason that a 50 year old employee who because of automation and dislocation in industry has to change his employment from one company to another under federal jurisdiction would find himself

[Mr. Pringle.]

starting again at the bottom of the ladder, thus receiving shorter holidays than an employee aged 23 who commenced employment three years before at the age of 20. Such a man at age 50 would perhaps require three weeks' holiday far more than his junior colleague.

We are living in a time of automation which requires dislocation of employment. Therefore rigid approaches to questions of holidays may not be entirely suitable. It seems to me that while the federal government has to set the pace in certain broad areas, and will do so, at the same time it has to approach the matter in a flexible manner, perhaps reflecting in its deliberations and final decisions a concept of holidays that is related to the age of the worker.

We all know that a worker at the advanced age of 60 might require a longer holiday than a worker aged 25 or 30. Therefore I think the whole question requires study. Rather than boxing it in within the scheme proposed, we should study the question of dislocation caused by automation and the development of human resources. We might perhaps ask the question: Why only three weeks after three years? It might well be the case that a longer holiday is required in certain segments of industry that warrant it and a shorter holiday in others that do not. As some hon. members have already indicated, there has to be a certain relationship between holidays and productivity.

I agree we must recognize the fact that the federal government sets the pace for the private sector, and an initiative of this kind would have this effect. But rather than go into the question in this manner it seems to me we should approach it in greater depth, and before making a final decision analyse all of the factors that I have briefly outlined.

[Translation]

Mr. Guy LeBlanc (Rimouski): Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I shall give my opinion on the bill brought forward by the member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles).

It is obvious at once that this bill will meet the approval of all legislators, who must necessarily be interested in the Canadian workers' lot.

In view of the constantly increasing pace at which our society is evolving, we know that owing to the progress of technology, the number of working hours is bound to decrease, and that consequently within a few years, we shall have to give serious consideration to