

total employment to between 1,300 and 1,350 at shutdown time. The lay-off will mostly affect indirect workers in an attempt to keep their overhead rate down. The company is trying to achieve a ratio of one direct to .65 indirect and will probably achieve .65 by July. The company will give us ample warning of any changes, up or down, to the above schedule.

● (2220)

The company said it appreciated the vigorous effort being made by the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Jamieson) and the Canadian government, but said corporate responsibility to other employees and shareholders made it necessary to issue the notices.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS—CAMBODIA—INQUIRY AS TO CANADIAN PROTEST AGAINST VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Mr. Douglas Roche (Edmonton-Strathcona): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to see the Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Miss Bégin) here for this great moment we are going to have in this jammed House of Commons.

A few days ago I opened up the subject of human rights with the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. MacEachen) by asking him a question concerning the terrible situation with regard to the violation of human rights in Cambodia. I attempted to go on at that time to discuss the very much related question of Canada's ratification of the United Nations covenant of human rights as an expression of our concern. I opened this question up because of the escalation of brutality toward human beings which we have seen in flagrant cases in Chile and Cambodia, to name but two of the outrageous situations of the violations of human rights in the world today.

I read recently the report of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. It makes chilling reading indeed as a catalogue of primitive brutality committed against Chileans by their own rulers. The report concludes, and I quote:

Denial of human rights and fundamental freedoms, torture and inhuman, cruel and degrading treatment have become a pattern of governmental policies in Chile.

With regard to Cambodia, press reports from that country and neighbouring countries are conclusive in telling us of the mass executions in death valleys of Cambodians, mowed down in a cross-fire of bullets by Khmer Rouge forces. The old and the young are wasting away from starvation, disease, and exhaustion. All of this terrible violation of human rights has been confirmed by western diplomats in Peking. Therefore I ask what we in this country are doing to launch our protest to the United Nations about this violation?

I also ask why it is that, ten years after the U.N. covenant on human rights was passed by the United Nations, in the year 1966, Canada still has not ratified that covenant? There was a federal-provincial meeting last December 11 at which time the federal and provincial governments came to an agreement. Now, almost four months later, the necessary paper work still has not been done. We still have not ratified the covenant.

Adjournment Debate

I received a letter from the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp) informing me of some of the reasons why Canada has not been able to move. It comes down to the question of one of the provinces being extremely slow in putting its signature on the document for ratification. It makes me wonder why it is in this country we have to be slowed down by constitutional battles in order to express in a formal way our shock and protest at incursions on human rights around the world.

I do not agree that it is an unimportant matter that Canada has not yet ratified the covenant on human rights. Thirty-five countries have done so. I realize that the covenant would only be applicable in countries which have ratified it, but what is necessary is that we get on to a sound course of human conduct by using the charter of the United Nations and the Declaration of Human Rights as a basis of law, and proceed from there to the establishment of an international court for the enforcement of that law. This will require our creating instruments to express the standards and the obligations which countries of the world ought to respect. In other words, action by Canada in this regard would help to raise the moral climate of the world. Surely it is better to keep increasing moral pressure on nations than it is to keep quiet, thus appearing to tolerate the great evils which are taking place.

The final resolution of this matter necessitates the establishment of a universal court of human rights to which individuals could go for redress. Right now only countries can take such action. We have to move forward, as Sean MacBride, the distinguished Nobel Peace Prize winner says, to new ways of thinking, and bring about some form of supernatural authority so that the individual can make claims under international law. This brings us right back to our immediate concern today. Canada must express, in the United Nations, its continuing protest against the violation of human rights, particularly in Cambodia and Chile, and expedite the ratification of the covenant on human rights, because it is a scandal that we should have allowed ourselves to be bogged down in our constitutional battles leading to our inability to take that action.

Miss Monique Bégin (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I am somewhat at a loss after listening to what has been said by the hon. member. I thought he was sincere in his questioning of the minister the other day, on March 24, on the situation in Cambodia. Tonight he made only passing reference to Cambodia after which he went on to speak of Chile, after which he criticized us for not having signed the human rights covenants. Then he went on to refer to a constitutional debate involving Quebec! As a result I think the House will understand if I found it difficult to follow the precise idea the hon. member had in mind.

With regard to the human rights covenants, which have not yet been signed by Canada, I can tell him that I represented the department at the federal-provincial conference, a meeting which went on very well. I would like the hon. member to reflect upon the fact, that maybe Quebecers somehow felt not very sure of their own rights when participating at the national level, probably because of abrasive statements such as the ones he just made.