

Private Members' Business

was what was intended and I would not agree to that point.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Before allowing the Hon. Member for Chambly to rise, I will recognize the Hon. Member for Saint-Hubert.

Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Hubert): Mr. Speaker, I should like to give my views and make some comments on the bill introduced by the Hon. Member for Richelieu.

I wish first of all to emphasize the importance of this issue which has serious consequences on Canadians as far as maintaining essential services in some industrial areas under the Canada Labour Code.

I wish also to emphasize the fact that my hon. colleagues have for once an opportunity to discuss labour relations in an atmosphere more constructive and less tumultuous than is the case during a debate on a back to work legislation.

The Hon. Member for Richelieu has brought to our attention a very thorough bill with many features indicative of the care which the hon. member brought to its drafting.

This bill is directly related to the provisions of the Canada Labour Code dealing with the operation of Crown corporations. According to Section 90.1 of Bill C-201, "Crown corporation" means a corporation referred to in section 5 of the Canada Labour Code, Part I. Well, the said Section 5 states, and I quote:

"This Part applies in respect of any corporation established to perform any function or duty on behalf of the Government of Canada—, except any such corporation—that the Governor in Council excludes from the operation of this Part"

Mr. Speaker, this bill my hon. colleagues are dealing with applies to a number of Crown corporations, but not all of them. For instance, among the Crown corporations which would be affected by this bill, let us mention Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, all the administrations of the Canada Ports Corporation, from Halifax to Vancouver, the Canada Post Corporation, the Canadian National Railways, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the Atlantic and Pacific Pilotage Authorities, the St. Lawrence Seaway Authority as well as the Royal Canadian Mint. Those are the various industries which would be affected by this bill, if adopted.

Next, Mr. Speaker, I should like to deal with another aspect of this bill, namely the essential quality of the industries which come under the Canada Labour Code. I will be satisfied with saying that this essential character, within a labour relation context, is not a static principle. The notion is linked to the duration and the circumstances. So, what is applicable in some instances may not be in others.

Among the Crown corporations I mentioned, there are obviously some which provide goods and services vital to the economic well-being of the country or to another essential aspect, while others will not fit the definition of "essentiality" that we could agree on. Therefore, we must ask ourselves if the bill accommodates the uniqueness of these corporations. I mean is it appropriate to make all Crown corporations comply with the stringent restrictions provided for in the bill? Does the essentiality of public goods and services warrant such constraints? It must also be pointed out, Mr. Speaker, that collective bargaining is not standard procedure and only a few unionized workers are protected by collective agreements in certain fields. In others, many competing corporations would be likely to look for alternate goods and services suppliers in the event of a work stoppage. In both cases, the essentiality of the corporation itself is irrelevant, since essential goods and services will normally be maintained.

One aspect of essential services we may find worthwhile to reflect upon for a moment is the point or stage of a work stoppage when an intervention would be warranted. In certain essential industries, the work stoppage will generally not have negative economic or social side effects in the first stage of the strike or lockout, say during the first week. I suggest that it is unrealistic to think that an immediate response is necessary. The reason being that a premature response could adversely affect collective bargaining by reducing the pressure to settle placed on both sides and therefore allowing workers and employers to evade their responsibility toward collective bargaining and the public.

• (1840)

Mr. Speaker, when I look at the bill and keeping in mind the various aspects of essential services I can only experience a feeling of doubt with respect to what I would call a measure of equity when we are dealing with the many Crown corporations that are subject to the Labour Code. For one thing, Mr. Speaker, the prohibitions provided in the bill concerning the use of outside