

Canada Labour (Standards) Code

the results that came out of the recent discussions, that the minister's assurance be implemented. That is important to the two parties concerned.

Mr. Barnett: I very well recall, Mr. Speaker, the day on which the minister publicly in this house gave the commitment to which he has just referred, namely that he would introduce this bill. I quite agree that this was long before the development of the recent incidents to which he has been referring. May I say I certainly did not have it in my mind to suggest otherwise.

However, I still feel that it is in order for me to express my regret that it was necessary for this parliament to bring in this amending bill to make provision for statutory holidays and vacations with pay for these particular employees in order to honour what in my view was the intent of parliament when the original labour code was adopted.

I did preface my remarks by saying that I was not asking the minister to make any comment on the views that I am expressing, which are my own. I also realize that he, as Minister of Labour, has been involved in delicate and difficult negotiations with both parties; therefore, I do not ask him to agree with me, or for that matter to disagree with me. All I was going to say, Mr. Speaker, was that in the most recent situation on the west coast these same employers had been bandying around rather freely in the public press allegations about illegal strikes. As far as I am concerned, this is an attitude of mind on the part of certain employers which is all too frequent, by which they try to arrogate unto themselves the right to interpret the law.

While I agree, Mr. Speaker, that technically perhaps they did follow a correct interpretation of the law, nevertheless I want to register my regret as one member of this house that they did see fit to do so. As the minister has indicated, only upon the passage of this bill will statutory holidays be paid for, and annual vacations will be paid for in respect to employees who it is suggested in the terms of this bill are engaged in multi-employer employment.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I want to join with the other members of the house who have spoken in indicating full support for this bill. I will certainly be most happy to see its speedy passage, and I hope that its passage may be one element in bringing about reconsideration of some of the past attitudes that have prevailed, with particular reference to the west coast of Canada with which I am

[Mr. Nicholson.]

most familiar, and indeed with respect to multi-employer employment in other parts of Canada.

Motion agreed to, bill read the second time and the house went into committee, Mr. Batten in the chair.

On clause 1—*Definitions*.

Mr. Nicholson: Mr. Chairman, it might be helpful before we embark on our study of this bill, even though there is only the one clause, if I were to comment briefly on the remarks of the speakers who have participated in the debate on second reading. I might say that I am in entire agreement with most of them.

• (4:00 p.m.)

All hon. members who participated in the debate or who are familiar with the debate that took place when my predecessor piloted this important legislation through parliament—legislation which was long overdue—will recall that my predecessor stated it would take some time to work out practical arrangements for adjusting hours of work in all industries affected in the way referred to by the hon. member for Skeena. That remark, of course, applied to such industries as shipping and trucking, where long hours traditionally have been worked. To my horror and surprise I found that in the trucking industry they worked 72 hours a week, sometimes even longer hours, but 72 per week was not uncommon.

An hon. Member: Just like members of parliament.

Mr. Nicholson: The legislation was long overdue. I think we have made substantial progress since it became law. The settlement of the truckers' strike in Ontario, which lasted for such a long time, was delayed by trying to bring about a formula to reduce the work week, which often was upwards of 80 hours a week, to 40 hours a week in a relatively short space of time.

Mr. Starr: May I ask the minister a question? Has he not enforced the Canada Labour (Standards) Code in respect of hours worked per week in all industries coming under federal jurisdiction?

Mr. Nicholson: No, Mr. Chairman, but I am happy to say that the code is in effect in most instances.

Mr. Starr: In view of the fact that the act provides for only 18 months deferment, that