

Government Orders

I encourage the government after the third hour of debate which takes place at noon on Monday to be here to vote in favour of Bill C-62 so that we will have in place a mechanism that will work and that will satisfy labour and management to some extent. It will prevent these disputes and these disruptions from happening in the future.

I call on the Liberals now to be here on Monday to listen to the third hour of private members' debate and to vote so that these disputes will not occur in the future.

As my last question I ask the hon. Minister of Labour if she will support Bill C-262 which will put in place a last best offer arbitration procedure that will prevent any disruptions in the grain handling system from occurring in the future?

I ask the labour minister that now and I encourage her to support the bill next Monday. I ask her whether she will support this bill.

[Translation]

The Chairman: The Minister of Labour may prefer to answer both members at the same time. The hon. member for the official opposition put a question earlier. Does the minister wish to respond or would she rather wait until the end of this discussion?

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Labour, Lib.): Mr. Chairman, in response to the question asked by the hon. member from the Bloc Québécois, I will remind him that clause 11 of the bill before us allows the parties to amend any provision of the collective agreement, including those that will be imposed on them, other than the term of the collective agreement, of course. Clause 11 gives a fair bit of flexibility.

• (2105)

Second, I would tell my colleague from the Reform Party that the government has already made a decision on all the problems that he has raised. First, it will solve the problem very quickly through this back to work legislation but also by setting up an industrial inquiry commission that will review the collective agreement structure.

I do not know whether the investigation commissioner will draw the same conclusions as the hon. member from the Reform Party, but I think that we should analyse the situation as a whole and that is why we will appoint an investigation commissioner.

[English]

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg Transcona, NDP): Mr. Chairman, I have a question for the Minister of Labour. I wonder if she could tell the House whether or not it is the general policy of the government to bring in back to work legislation which does not legislate a settlement, as is the case with this legislation?

Is it the policy of the government to bring in legislation without a settlement? The legislation before us does not have a settlement. It appoints a mediator or arbitrator. Is this the general policy of the government with respect to back to work legislation?

[Translation]

Hon. Lucienne Robillard (Minister of Labour, Lib.): Mr. Chairman, the government assesses each situation on its own merits.

[English]

Mr. Allan Kerpan (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre, Ref.): Mr. Chairman, I was sitting here just a few minutes ago wondering why I was happy to be here at seven minutes after nine on a Wednesday evening. I just realized what it was. I get to sit in the front row once a year. However, that is hardly reason enough to be here once a year; to pass back to work legislation in labour disputes.

Many of the points I want to make this evening to the government and to the opposition have already been made so I will dispense with them. However, there are a couple of questions and a couple of concerns that I do have with this legislation and I would like to spend a few minutes asking a couple of questions.

Before I do that, I had a letter handed to me today from an alfalfa dehydrator in Olds, Alberta. I think it is worthwhile reading it into the record tonight. It is an obvious concern from people in that industry who go through these types of labour disputes on an almost regular basis. Certainly they have concern for the future of their businesses whenever they see one coming down the road.

I will read this letter, if I may:

If in any small way my name or the name of my company can stop the insane abuse of power a very few people have over so many others, please use them.

In our industry Canada only has a 3 per cent market share. The U.S.A. has 85 per cent, China and Australia have about 5 per cent each. The Americans cannot be happier, they probably will sell lots more product now and will lock in more future sales because of Canada's poor track record and reliability and with no future end in sight to the strikes. My customers from Japan ask, "How can we be so stupid?" "If you cannot supply them we have no choice". Americans will win again, not because they are better, more competitive, or have better quality but through default.

If the Dominion of Canada wants me to pay taxes and to help fight the deficit, please help me deliver products I have sold. End this strike forever.

It is signed: "A discouraged export business owner". His name is Blair Wright from Olds, Alberta.

The reason I read that is that I think it is critical. I echo the words of my colleagues who have said that we cannot continue to work under this system. I encourage the minister to develop some sort of system. I encourage her to do that in order to pre-empt these types of labour disputes. As the member of Parliament for Moose Jaw—Lake Centre, I would offer my