

The legislation which will come before the House is a disappointment. When it comes before us, that will be our opportunity to discuss the details of it. However, the failure of the House of Commons to address the needs of workers in the workplace is not dealt with in the legislation. That is of great concern to us on this side of the House.

It is appropriate that this motion has been brought before the House because both Opposition Parties have at least guaranteed that the subjects of labour, the workplace, the rights of our workers and the need of our economy for productivity will be discussed. I am pleased that the members of the New Democratic Party have, as our Party has for so many months, called for a debate on this subject.

● (1140)

It is obvious that the Liberal Government is attempting to play politics with these current amendments just by the way they were introduced. They were introduced late in the session, almost as an afterthought or last-minute election expediency. It attempts to buy labour votes with intention rather than introducing meaningful and substantive legislation. Substantive legislation could still be developed. The Government could take the base of what is provided and allow for debate in the House of Commons.

If the Government sees this labour legislation as a priority, let it bring it before the House of Commons for many days of debate. Let us measure its intent by the number of days it is willing to commit. Let us see how many days it will commit to second reading and how many days to committee.

This legislation is poor, weak and inappropriate. Representatives of labour and business are not satisfied with it. They find it wanting and inadequate. If we are going to add substance to it and make it meaningful, it must be talked about here in the House of Commons and in committee, and delegations must be heard.

The Minister has given a commitment when the legislation moves to committee that at least the major players, those with the major interest, will be heard. I hope that happens in this Parliament. Such a committee should sit. It should listen to the problems of labour, hear about the suffering of our workers and listen to the problems of management. I hope this will be allowed. It is important that it happen.

My colleague, the Hon. Member for Perth (Mr. Jarvis), called for legislation, amendments and discussion in the House over six months ago. The Government claims that this legislation is the result of extensive consultation, yet many groups indicate they were consulted three years ago. The workplace is different from what it was three years ago. They want to be heard again. If this Government wants, it can commit the time for this matter to be dealt with extensively.

Unfortunately, the amendments seem to be little more than an extension of social benefits. They fall far short of the objectives of the proponents of any part of this question. Will this legislation create new jobs? I do not see any new jobs being created other than possibly in the bureaucracy. It will not create job security or increase productivity. It will not

create any jobs for labour. If it will not do any of this, what will it create? It certainly is not the answer we are looking for.

This Bill was introduced late in the session in the hope that there would be little or no examination of the legislation. Any examination of it by any element of concern either in this House of Commons or in the country would find it wanting. This Bill was not produced in the interest of the workers but in the interest of the Liberal Party of Canada in its attempt to cling to power. That is what it is all about. That must not be allowed.

I am disappointed with the New Democratic Party. We again see a situation of confrontation in labour relations, and what does the NDP do? Instead of addressing the issue, that Party wants to play politics by throwing a slam at the Conservative Party or the Liberal Party.

The failure of our Parliament to create meaningful legislation that will develop the workplace is to the shame of all of us. Our people in the country are crying out for jobs. They want new creativity, new jobs and a better kind of job security. I do not know why elements of labour look to the New Democratic Party, which wants to play politics even with this motion. The New Democratic Party cannot lead the labour movement out of the wilderness and into the power of government. Everyone around them can see that the horse they are riding is on its last legs. The NDP cannot get into power in government. Even if they knew what to do if they got in, it would not matter.

The Liberals are and have been in power for many years. What is the result? Unemployment, rising interest rates, falling productivity are the result. That is the reality. If Canadians would judge this Government on this issue alone in an election, it would be swept out of power. It is a labour issue. It is an issue of workers in our society who are struggling. They are less and less successful every day. It remains for us to examine this legislation carefully. The hope lies in new legislation that will emerge from a new government with a new mandate.

We must not look at the politics in this issue. That is why I reworded the motion. I had seen the NDP motion and I was disappointed. Clearly the NDP motion forgot not only about the health and safety of Canadian workers, but the concerns of women in the workplace. My colleague from Kingston and the Islands (Miss MacDonald) will address the problems of women in the workplace later in this debate. I am pleased for this debate so that she can bring those issues and those concerns forward.

We adapted our motion to recognize the rapidly changing workplace, technological change and the necessity of job retraining. While the rest are arguing politics, we have had a task force come forward with positive recommendations which identify the reality of the workplace today. Of those working today, 90 per cent will require retraining. Where does this legislation address retraining or technological change? It does not address women in the workplace, nor does it address young people entering the workplace. They may never find their place. They are losing hope more and more. Some have gone from a part-time job to welfare, then off welfare and back into