

*Canada Labour Code*

tive way, then you have gains in productivity and economic activity and a larger share of the market-place.

This is good for the people involved, the company, the employees, indeed for society. But when you do not have that, and witness the Government of Canada's record where new technology was introduced without consultation and concurrence of labour, the major example being the post office, what do we get for it? An increase in employees instead of a decrease. An increase in inefficiency instead of a decrease. Why? Because people are not machines; people are very special. When they want to co-operate, when they want to work, when they are involved, they can make it work. But when they are not, they can make it not work. They are very clever at making it not work. They will beat the machine every time if that is the challenge you set for them.

In that context it is particularly disappointing to look at those changes to the Canada Labour Code. We are on the verge of a new era. Management-labour relations have to deal with rapidly changing technology. But what is the Government of Canada's response? What is this Minister's response? He changes the word "ninety" to "one hundred and twenty". That is how much thinking the Government of Canada has done about this new phenomenon. Let us have 120 days' notice instead of 90 days' notice. Well, we have a fair number of years' experience with the Canada Labour Code and the section dealing with new technology. It is not hard to draw conclusions based on that experience. The provisions are too vague, the definitions are too narrow. They do not work. Do we find in these proposed amendments anything that would change the vagueness, anything that would change the narrowness? Sadly, we do not. What is next, Mr. Speaker?

● (1530)

From the unions' perspective, the conditions leading to the reopening of bargaining are somewhat strange and tough. The union must prove that the employer plans to introduce new equipment or material, and—not or—that there will be a change in the manner in which work is carried out, and—not or—that the particular change is directly related to the introduction of new equipment. That is the strongest of the three conditions.

Such conditions can only create an adversarial climate. How does a clause such as that move us closer to a sense of co-operation and togetherness? It will not take place in this instance.

The Minister of Labour (Mr. Ouellet) should know that section 152 is totally inadequate for the modern age. Section 150 contains such phrases as "substantially and adversely affect" and "significant numbers of employees". What do those phrases mean? I do not believe that anyone in the House could tell us what those phrases mean, yet they are absolutely critical phrases with respect to interpreting the section of the Canada Labour Code that deals with technological change that is to come.

This legislation is disappointing. I suggest that there will be many witnesses who, at committee stage, will tell committee

members that those sections of the Canada Labour Code should have been changed long ago. Section 149(2) of the Canada Labour Code should have been amended, but was not. That section deals with the issue of reopening an agreement that had been signed. If one looks at the labour relations in this country over the last few years and recognizes the speed with which new technological changes have come into being, it is easy to recognize that although employers and employees bargain in good faith and sign contracts, there suddenly may be a technological breakthrough six months later that has a massive impact potentially on productivity. Yet there is no adequate mechanism for reopening those contracts to allow employers and employees to work together to introduce that technology.

One positive measure in this legislation concerns lengthening the notice clause from 90 days to 120 days. It is unfortunate that it is not 180 days, because time is required to devise solid plans and to work together to implement those plans.

Just a few short years ago we had the second highest standard of living in the world. We have dropped to fourteenth and are continuing to slip. One of the reasons for that drop is that there is too much conflict between the federal Government and provincial governments and between management and labour. We must embark on an era of co-operation and develop an attitude in this country where we work together to accomplish our goals.

That is the fault with the amendments to the Canada Labour Code. They were not brought to us in a spirit of togetherness. Some of us even wonder if Members of Parliament were made aware of these amendments before some major employers were made aware of them. These amendments were introduced at a time when probably we have less than three weeks in which to complete examination of these measures and pass the legislation through the House before the summer. It will require the co-operation of all three Parties of the House and a willingness to work extra hours to hear expert witnesses in this country to even have a chance to amend this legislation so that it addresses more effectively the job that needs to be done.

Our Party is willing to embark on that exercise. I hope other Parties are as well.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Herbert):** There follows a ten-minute period for questions and comments.

**Mr. Blenkarn:** Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member did not get into the health and safety aspect of the Bill. I am sure that he has had an opportunity to read Clause 20 which deals with amendments to Section 82 of the Act. Although there are two pages of requirements prescribed for employers, I thought the requirements for employees were particularly horrendous. Was the Hon. Member aware that an employee is required, under penalty of fairly large fines, to ensure that he uses safety materials and equipment in the manner prescribed, presumably, by regulation, and to follow prescribed procedures with respect to health and safety? Furthermore, he is to co-operate, again in the manner prescribed by regulations under the Act,