

*Supply—Labour*

minister could not have handled the two jobs last year.

The Department of Labour is now re-examining its position vis-à-vis the pressing realities of today's world of work and is setting about its clearly defined objectives with enthusiasm and with all the resources at its disposal. The ongoing objective of this new Department of Labour is to improve continuously the environment in which Canadians work in such vital areas as their remuneration, their employment standards, their safety, their employee-employer relationships and their individual human rights.

The major structural reorganization of the department to meet these new goals has, for the most part, been completed over the past year. Under the deputy minister its three main programs, labour relations, labour standards and benefits and research and development, are headed by two assistant deputy ministers and a director general of high calibre and great experience, all of them with both labour and industrial backgrounds. I might say that I think we have also been fortunate in having attracted to the department other senior program officers who bring with them not only great skill in their specialties but also the benefits of new and different viewpoint from the outside. Recruitment of more such men and women of experience will continue and will in fact be stepped up.

Last year at estimate time I pointed out that one of the most significant new developments in the whole labour relations field was the passage by this house of the Canada Labour (Standards) Code. In the administration of this new code, along with the Fair Wages and Hours of Labour Act, much has been accomplished, although much still remains to be done. We are making encouraging progress.

• (12:10 p.m.)

As I said in December last, the enactment of the Canada Labour (Safety) Code by parliament at that time was also an important achievement. Up until December 1966, there had not been a statute of general application to industries and undertakings under federal jurisdiction having as its primary purpose the ensuring of safe working conditions for all employees. No reference could be made to the effective date of the new legislation until the legislation had been passed, although a great deal of planning and thinking had been done. I might say, however, that my department has undertaken an entirely new and vital

role, that of safeguarding the health and well-being of a large segment of the Canadian working force. Considerable planning and other preparatory work is already under way with the provinces and industry with a view, I might say, to having the legislation proclaimed and in full force and effect before the end of this year.

My department also administers both the Canada Fair Employment Practices Act and the Female Employees Equal Pay Act. These two acts, which are similar to legislation in the provinces, cover all businesses and undertakings within federal jurisdiction and the department is in the process of implementing a broad-based educational program to provide a leadership role for all jurisdictions.

In the international field Canada currently is studying three important international instruments adopted some five months ago by the general assembly of the United Nations. These include the covenant on economic, social and cultural rights, the covenant on civil and political rights, and an optional protocol to the covenant on civil and political rights.

Next year has been designated international year for human rights and officials of my department have attended the planning conference for Canadian participation and subsequent meetings.

I should like to say a word about the conciliation and arbitration branch of the department which was of prime importance during the year 1966 and is likely to be in the months ahead. This branch administers the Industrial Relations and Disputes Investigation Act. The principles involved in the act, I might say, are designed to develop maximum initiative by labour and management in the regulation of their own affairs, that is, without government intervention, consistent, of course, with government intervention if and when this becomes necessary in the interests of the public. In the reorganization of the industrial relations branch which took place in 1966, the department established the employee representation branch to serve as the administrative agency of the Canada Labour Relations Board.

Directly related to our responsibility to assist in the improvement of the labour relations environment is the department's labour-management consultation program. This program seeks to encourage joint consultation with a view to lessening crises and conflicts which sometimes lead to unnecessary work stoppages. Our work has been rewarded by a