

Mr. McKenzie: Mr. Speaker, earlier when we were discussing this bill, the minister was answering questions and making statements. Unless something has transpired in the last half an hour or so, because I had to leave the chamber for a short period, I assume the same procedure continues. The hon. member for Qu'Appelle-Moose Mountain (Mr. Hamilton) made a few comments on the bill and the minister answered him on two or three occasions. I thought that same procedure was followed.

Mr. Regan: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. By agreement of the House I answered one question which dealt with the subject of the bill. I would be happy to discuss this matter elsewhere with the hon. member, either inside or outside the House under appropriate circumstances. But what he has raised does not relate to the bill in any way. I do not believe it is within the rules of the House for me to deal with this question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): I think that answers the issue in my mind, both in terms of what the practice was earlier this afternoon and in terms of the minister's reply. We do not have a question and answer period. The hon. member for Winnipeg-Assiniboine is welcome to take the floor.

Mr. McKenzie: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the minister's comments. Now that I have read this letter into the record, I hope he will take the first opportunity to write to me telling me what action he and his department will be taking to deal with this very serious problem.

Mr. Blais: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. On the point of order which I raised initially which related to the census, I want to indicate to the hon. member from Calgary that I am pleased to announce that Statistics Canada has received 82 per cent of the questionnaires. This response far exceeds our wildest expectations.

Mr. Hawkes: Mr. Speaker, I rise on the same point or order. You have just permitted a minister to make a statement. I believe that under those conditions when a minister stands and makes a statement we are entitled to a question and an answer.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker): That is a very interesting interpretation. The Chair has to hear enough of an hon. member's point of order, whether it be that of a minister or not, to determine whether there is a point of order. There was not a point of order, but I did recognize the hon. member for Calgary West just to see if he wanted to make some sort of comment. He has made his comment. I will now recognize the hon. member for Western Arctic (Mr. Nickerson).

Mr. Dave Nickerson (Western Arctic): Mr. Speaker, it had been my intention, and it might still be, to finish shortly before four o'clock so that this matter can be dealt with. However, I consider some of the interventions made by the Minister of Supply and Services (Mr. Blais) quite unnecessary. I am now reconsidering the view I held previously.

Department of Labour Act

It is a pleasure to speak on a matter that, in its importance and urgency, truly befits Friday afternoon's debate in the House of Commons. The objective of the bill before us, which has been stated several times, is to remove the statutory requirement to publish the *Labour Gazette*. A number of members have referred to the drafting of the revised Section 4 which we have before us. As far as I can see, this is exactly the same wording, word for word, as we had in the first part of the old Section 4. I do not see much to challenge in this wording. It has stood the test of 81 years of time. The only difference between this wording and wording which might be put into place in 1981 is that the legal drafting within the Government of Canada and the Department of Justice in this day and age tends to be somewhat more precise, but it also tends to be more difficult to understand. I think the 1900s style of legal draftsmanship is in many respects better than, for instance, that of the income tax amendments with which we dealt earlier this year.

As pointed out by previous speakers, the minister has been breaking the law for some time now. He has not published the *Labour Gazette*. This is something we should not take too lightly. Had it not been for the manner in which the motion that was before the House yesterday had been dealt with, I might be able to suggest certain sanctions that might be applied to the minister on account of his transgressions, but that is not to be the case. By and large I am inclined to buy the argument presented by the Minister of Labour (Mr. Regan) today. I presume that the statements of reported facts are correct. I have no reason to believe otherwise.

• (1550)

I understand that the circulation of this journal is quite small and has been declining for some time. As well, it is very expensive to put out. We have heard estimates ranging from \$400,000 a year down to \$30,000 a year. Probably the absolute truth lies somewhere between those two figures. The information is available elsewhere today. There are methods by which information relating to labour and discussions on matters of labour can be dealt with. There is a wide variety of both academic and popular journals in which people can read about labour matters.

I can understand the objections put forward by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) and his rather sentimental attachment to the *Labour Gazette*. Most of the views of the NDP on labour matters come from that period of time, or slightly before. Most of it belongs to the latter part of the nineteenth century.

Mr. Knowles: Come, come.

Mr. Nickerson: That is quite true. In the old section 4 of the Department of Labour Act, it was specified that the *Labour Gazette* should deal with statistics and other information dealing with conditions of the labour market as opposed to the part of section 4 that we have here which refers to conditions of labour. I suggest there is a distinction there, but in all