

Labour Adjustment Benefits

brought into question the serious burdens placed on workers in such situations. Owing to his growing concern with this matter, on March 9, 1978, the Minister of Labour (Mr. Caccia) appointed the commission of inquiry on redundancies and lay-offs under the chairmanship of A.W.R. Carrothers to study these problems. His recommendations, published under the date of April 5, 1979, laid the basis of the proposed legislation before Your Honour today.

● (1730)

I would like to give a rough summary of the Carrothers recommendations. First, there was a recommendation that, through legislation, redundancy management be recognized as a shared responsibility and that "effective joint consultation" be required. The commission argued that the right to be consulted should be applicable to both unionized and non-unionized employees. In the case of non-union operators, it was recognized that a mechanism to provide employee representation would have to be established.

Second, on the matter of notice, the commission proposed that a "notice of intent to introduce a change" should be required. At this time, the manpower consultative services of Employment and Immigration Canada would be available to assist the parties. The purpose was to ensure consultation before a fixed plan of lay-offs was established. Under present provisions in the Canada Labour Code, this is not the case. If "notice of intent" were established, the commission proposed that present notice requirements be reduced.

Third, the employers and employees should be prepared to resolve the impasse with respect to lay-offs or face third-party intervention. The commission chose not to recommend processes for the resolution of impasses in the belief that prescribed procedures would inhibit consultation, and that ad hoc intervention should be in reserve.

Fourth, employer and unions, or a committee of employees created for the purpose, should establish standing "work councils" to meet on a regular basis for continuous joint manpower planning. It was not proposed that this be a legislated requirement.

The government, when considering the precise form which the legislation should take, took the recommendations of Mr. Carrothers one step further. The government realizes that there is a problem when one employee is laid off; but whether such a laid-off employee is one of 50 or 300, the government proposes in the new Section 60(1) of the Canada Labour Code that all lay-offs involving 50 or more employees will be treated equally; that is to say, the employer shall give notice to the minister, in writing, of his intention to terminate employment at least 16 weeks before the date of termination of employment of the employee in the group whose employment is first terminated. Subsection (2) provides that written notice of termination be given to the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Axworthy) and the trade union representing any redundant employee.

Implementing Carrothers' previously summarized recommendation of notice through Section 60.1(1) will ensure that

the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission will have access to the information requested for it to be of assistance to laid-off employees since it requires that:

An employer who gives notice to the minister under section 60 and any trade union to which a copy of such notice is given shall give the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission any information requested by it for the purpose of assisting any redundant employee and shall co-operate with the Commission to facilitate the re-establishment in employment of that employee.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the time is insufficient to enter into the thorough discussion merited by Sections 60.1(2) through 60.3. I recommend them for the hon. members' perusal with the thought that they go a long way to effecting the recommendations made by the Carrothers commission and will prove to be a great boon to the workers of Canada.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, after so many days of committee hearings, it was a pleasure to be able to return to the chamber, not to discuss a bill which may not be an important bill, and I will make a case for that as time progresses today but, rather, to discuss what is certainly an important problem. I believe we have a piece of legislation which is still far from adequate, but perhaps somewhat better after the committee's examination of it. For those who may be listening to us today and have an interest in this problem of lay-offs, the transcripts which were largely generated by the witnesses who appeared before us should be of considerable interest. Obviously, they are obtainable from the Clerk of the House of Commons upon request.

Some weeks ago, I stood in this chamber and asked, first, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Gray) what he thought of the impact of the massive lay-offs on the health of Canadians. The Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce stood in his place and told me that I was off on some sort of wild goose chase and that lay-offs did not lead to health problems which should be of concern to him and his government. That flew in the face of the fact that the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce comes from Windsor, Ontario; and if he had simply read his daily newspapers over the last year and a half, he would have seen that a special mayor's committee laid out in the public domain the fact that social agencies and health agencies in Windsor had experienced a tremendous increase in the volume of requests for their services.

An hon. Member: He can't read!

Mr. Hawkes: Someone from across the chamber shouts, "He cannot read!" I do not know if that is correct or not, but certainly the minister does not seem to read his local newspapers. He does not seem to understand his own constituency and the difficulties for human beings which have been caused in that Windsor area by massive lay-offs.

● (1740)

Later that same day was the first opportunity that I had to speak in this chamber about the issues which Bill C-78 brings to our attention. In *Hansard* for that day we find the Minister