minimum standards, I think it will be a large step forward.

Another very important area that perhaps has been overlooked is the make-up of a full-time Canada Labour Relations Board. Prior to this there was a representative board that met monthly or, if necessary, more often. It was not unusual for cases coming before the federal board, where there was any technical objection, to be set over for a month and then another month, and so on through the whole procedure. Nor was it unusual, in my experience, to have cases where the anniversary would arrive and still no decision from the Canada Labour Relations Board. This is not intended to be a criticism of the people who make up the board, but a criticism of the type of board.

Surely in 1972, with all the rapid changes taking place, there is a desperate need for a competent full-time board, meeting on a full-time basis, to deal with the many real and demanding problems that require a speedy decision. The proposal for a full-time board is a major improvement.

Another section that should be examined very carefully, because it has been talked about in this chamber before, is that which provides for certification of councils of unions. On the face of it it does not seem a very significant point. Perhaps the best example under federal jurisdiction is the airlines industry and the problems that have occurred there in the past months and years. There have been strikes of technicians, of controllers, of this group and that group. In my view, this is an area where legislation could do a public service. It does not make sense to me that one union in the airline industry can make a settlement, whether it is the pilots or another group, and go back to work, and a week or a month later another small union strikes the industry, closes it down and then settles that, and a week, a month, or six months later still another small union strikes the industry and closes it down. This provision for councils of trade unions, which may be utilized by those unions to meet together jointly or be certified collectively, with one set of negotiations so that the industry would be either totally operative or totally closed down, is a step in the right direction. It will minimize some of the confusing aspects that presently exist in labour relations.

Another change that is somewhat significant, and of which I have heard considerable criticism across the country, is the proposal for 35 per cent of the employees to petition for a representation election. I have heard many criticisms, some of which have been made to me personally, that it is somewhat undemocratic for 35 per cent to decide whether there will be a union in a particular plant or industry.

I think those who make that criticism do not understand the legislation or its application. The 35 per cent rule is merely proof of interest. If between 35 and 50 per cent of the employees of any given concern display proof of interest in having a trade union represent them, they may petition for an election, and an election will be held. Union representation will require a majority of those voting, and not less than 35 per cent of the employees must vote on the petition for certification.

It is really very similar to what exists under the Taft-Hartley legislation in the United States. It is very necessary legislation, because too often a union will make an application to be certified, and by the time it goes through the lengthy process of a part-time board, and all the other factors involved, particularly if there is any resistance by the company, the whole unit is lost, and the rights of the workers under the legislation are totally lost to them. This makes provision for a speedy determination, with a majority of the workers deciding whether to be represented or unrepresented. I think that is an important improvement in the legislation.

Another provision deals with the right of the board to review questions, in particular, questions of seniority, when company mergers take place. In the age of the conglomerate, mergers, and the putting together of companies, too often company A takes over company B. The employees are all now employees of company A, and the original employees there—and often it is the employees who are more guilty than the company involved—say to the group joining them from company B, "You will all go to the bottom of the seniority list." Even though they may have had five, 10 or 25 years' service with the company taken over, they find themselves on the bottom of the list.

Fortunately, a number of cases that have been decided in the courts now hold that where such a merger takes place there must be an integration of the seniority; there must be a dovetailing of the seniority so that there will be fairness. An employee with 20 years' service with company B would now have 20 years' service with company A. This is a very necessary rule in many cases to protect the employees from their fellow employees.

I am most anxious to see that section in the legislation adopted, because there is a current case under federal jurisdiction that has been decided to the contrary. To digress for a moment, it involves the Post Office, which is under federal jursidiction, where the Post Office has taken over private contractors. Employees who have worked delivering mail for 10, 15, 20 or 25 years, driving little red trucks while employees of the contractor, have now been taken over by the federal government. They are still driving little red trucks, except that now they are owned by the Post Office.

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They have lost all their seniority. They now start with the federal government as civil servants, having lost all of their seniority and everything that flows from that. Most important, together with the seniority and the job security that flows from that, there are provisions in regard to additional holidays for 10, 15, or 20 years' service, and now the men who have spent most of their working lives in that work will start back at the bottom and try to rebuild most of their service. It would certainly be my hope that the federal government, in adopting this legislation, will see that in the other section of the federal government the same principle will be applied. I think that is important.

Honourable senators, one of the breeding grounds of discontent is where seniority is being eroded. When things like this happen, whatever excuses may be given, when there is no provision for the federal government or the Treasury Board to grant additional benefit or grant sen-