

Labour Relations

Indeed, as shown by the progressive steps the Postmaster General (Mr. Mackasey) has taken with respect to the concept of workers' management in the Post Office, the government in its own bailiwick is adopting the most contemporary and enlightened views on industrial democracy. That subject has caused even some members of the New Democratic Party, which has shown some understanding of labour matters, to become overly legalistic. It is one of the most cherished theses of the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby (Mr. Broadbent), the House leader of that party, that industrial democracy should be legislated. I can only say that we should approach industrial democracy legislation with as much caution as we approach legislation having to do with all other areas of labour relations. In this area the government should give leadership and encouragement, but it should not attempt quickly to adopt any legislative formula which might be considered as an easy solution to our present problems.

I see that my time has almost expired. As I want as many hon. members as possible to participate in this debate, I shall say just a few more words in conclusion. In my view the law in this field should be as minimal as possible. The government should provide as much encouragement as possible in the field of labour relations. Labour relations, being really human relations, are a field in which the expression of human freedom is of paramount importance.

Those who know the history of the labour movement, of workers in this country and, indeed, of all western countries, know how sensitive workers are on the subject of legislation. Only comparatively recently have they attained the right to the collective bargaining system which they now enjoy. For more than a century the working classes of all countries struggled hard to become free of repressive laws. Those on this side of the House do not propose to subject them ever again to such laws.

Mr. Dinsdale: Mr. Speaker, as it is almost six o'clock, may I call it six o'clock?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Does the House agree to call it six o'clock?

Some hon. Member: Agreed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. It being six o'clock I do now leave the chair until 8 p.m.

At six o'clock the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

Mr. MacGuigan: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Discussions among those here at this time reveal that there might be a disposition to agree to a 15 minute limit on speeches for the rest of the evening to allow more members to take part in the debate.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): The House has heard the suggestion of the parliamentary secretary that

[Mr. MacGuigan.]

speeches be limited to 15 minutes for the remainder of the evening. Is this agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris): Mr. Speaker, the motion before us is a timely one, no doubt prompted by the growing labour unrest in the country and particularly recent events in the province of Quebec.

As I read the motion, the mover, the hon. member for Kamouraska (Mr. Dionne), indicates its content that he is hoping there will be some urgent government action to deal with the problem of growing labour unrest—in the province of Quebec, mainly because of the threat to the Olympic Games. We are faced with a situation there where, in order to keep the workers on the job, it has become necessary to introduce a police state with three levels of police supervising the construction site of the Olympic Games to exclude trouble makers. This indicates the degree to which labour relations have degenerated in this country. It is not something that has come about overnight. It is symptomatic of the general unrest in society which is a part of our industrialization and urbanization process.

In a recent speech the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands (Miss MacDonald) referred to our emphasis on material values that is creating a situation of rising expectations, which has resulted in the current stress in our society. All sorts of solutions have been put forward. The socialists look toward Utopian economic solutions. The communists have authoritarian solutions. The resolution before us, and this has been mentioned by several speakers, suggests that we might resolve the problem by legislative action. No one else agrees that that is the solution. While there is a commonly used phrase that says "there ought to be a law against it," I do not think that any legislative provisions can deal adequately with the deteriorating labour situation that confronts Canada at the present time.

There is a fundamental change in values, a breakdown in the traditional hierarchy system where wages used to be related to education, and also a decline in the work ethic. We have a situation where the working poor who stay on the job are in a worse position in terms of income than those who decide to take advantage of unemployment insurance. These are all symptoms of the degree to which the problem has developed in this country. It is aggravated by rampant inflation.

Just as an example of how inflationary expectations have become built into our economy, I was shopping in my constituency yesterday and I made a little purchase. There was one price of \$5.50 and another price of \$4.50 on the box. This is a very simple little souvenir, a letter opener, which is now selling for \$5.50. When I asked the salesgirl, who was going to charge me the new price of \$5.50, why the increase, she said the latest inventory indicated there should be an additional dollar increase. This product is distributed by one of the large companies in Canada which also manufactures beer. I do not know whether it is a head of barley or wheat in the handle, but it is an indication that inflationary psychology is rampant. It is a problem that must be dealt with if we are going to come to grips with the current labour unrest in this country.