

Industrial Relations

worked for 52 weeks he is entitled to a week's holiday with pay. I think that is a general principle that is accepted by almost everyone across the country. If we cannot so arrange our industrial or any other type of development as to allow our workers at least two weeks' holidays with pay, it does seem to me there is something wrong.

It is true that it can be said this should be the subject of negotiation between employers and employees, but I am of the opinion that it would not do any harm to have legislation on the matter, because it is only a humane act to start with. It is something that should be taken care of by legislation rather than by negotiation. I do believe, too, that many of the provinces apply all these conditions, but the federal government is the one that should take the lead and set the example to the rest of the provinces. If the federal government took that lead, I think a great many of the provinces would follow. Of course, that does not offset the fact that we should have this principle implemented so far as the federal field is concerned.

I do not think there is anything more I could usefully say that would not be a repetition of what has been said. There are some clauses in the bill about which I am not too sure. The hon. member for New Westminster and myself have gone over the bill rather carefully, and I think it would be of advantage to the house—I cannot see any disadvantage to the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre—if the bill were sent to a committee for thorough study. I believe there are places that can be improved, but I want to state here and now that we agree with the general principle of the bill.

Mr. C. W. Carter (Burin-Burgeo): When I first read this resolution my first reaction was one of a faint sort of hope, born no doubt of wishful thinking, that its scope might be broad enough to include members of parliament. But after I got down to a serious study of the bill, and read particularly the explanatory note as to its purpose, I could not help but think what a great pity it is that such legislation is even necessary, because we are all our brothers' keepers whether we are employers or employees, and certainly annual holidays are in the interests of both.

In the world in which we live today, annual holidays are a necessity for health and for efficiency, and because of that they are in the national interest. Furthermore, the economic cost of annual holidays to employees is more than recovered in the gains to industry through less absenteeism

on account of ill health and greater production on account of better efficiency. Not only that, but we are living in an age when our way of life is challenged, and we are proponents of a way of life which is primarily based on the importance of the individual.

All our democratic system and all our democratic institutions have been built up on that principle, and certainly in an age of ideological conflict we cannot afford to forget that even for one minute. But on the other hand, Mr. Speaker, as I reflect more deeply on the bill, I must come to the conclusion that in one sense it hurts our democratic system, because of necessity it removes responsibility from the individual and we cannot remove responsibility without at the same time removing freedom of choice. These two factors are absolutely essential for the preservation and the development of our democratic way of life.

The explanatory note says that the purpose of this bill is to provide that all employees in Canada who come under federal labour jurisdiction be granted at least two weeks' holidays with pay after one year of employment. Certainly the stipulation of paid holidays is also a necessity because in our high cost society that we have built up here in Canada few employees can afford holidays without pay, and few can save up enough to enjoy a really good vacation out of their savings.

I think the important thing to remember about this legislation is that the key to this problem is not the number of employees affected but the number of employers, because it rests with every employer to grant these concessions to his employees whether they ask for them or not. I know it is pretty well admitted that the majority of our employers throughout Canada have already granted holidays with pay and that, as has been pointed out by the hon. member for Vancouver South, only a small percentage of employees of the total working force of Canada will benefit from this legislation, but I think proportionately the number of employers will be smaller still.

The point I wish to make, Mr. Speaker, is that this very small group of employers, by shirking their responsibility to care for their employees, are doing a great disservice to the cause of democracy, because it is their irresponsibility that has made this legislation necessary. I have always been grateful that I had the opportunity of taking my university training in the field of science, because an understanding of the great laws that govern the forces of nature help very much to understand the human forces that control society. One great natural law is the