

Supply—Labour

that people will not save for these eventualities. There must be some form of compulsory saving contributed to by the employer and by the worker from the very day he commences work. We are going to have to come to it.

It should not be a burden but it should be a pleasure for the federal government, through the Department of Labour, to lay out plans as quickly as possible to make people provide for themselves with respect to unemployment, old age and sickness. We all have a tendency to squander our means. We all have a tendency to put off today what we can do tomorrow. The great masses of Canadians and of the other people throughout this world will not do these essential things without compulsion. We as members of parliament know it. We are sent here to represent the people. It is almost time we were men enough to enact laws to make people protect themselves.

Mr. Knowles: Mr. Chairman, I regret that at this time of night it is necessary to detain the committee for a few minutes; but this is an extremely important department. Although I shall endeavour to refrain from repeating some of the arguments and suggestions that have been put forward by those who have already spoken in this debate, there are a few things I should like to say.

First of all, I am glad to know that the officials in the Department of Labour are about to undertake a thorough study of the Industrial Relations and Disputes Investigation Act. As hon. members know, not many days ago the house passed a motion concurring in the recommendation of the industrial relations committee that the principle of the check-off of trade union dues should be studied by the government. When the committee made that recommendation endorsing the principle of the check-off of trade union dues, it had been advised that it was the intention of the Department of Labour to review the Industrial Relations and Disputes Investigation Act, and it was the thought of the committee that that review might well include a study of this question of the check-off.

I do not propose to spend any more time tonight on that question of the check-off because the house, after voting down my bill many times, has endorsed that principle and has asked the Department of Labour to study it. But what I wish to draw attention to is that a study is to be made not only of the principle of the check-off but of the whole of the Industrial Relations and Disputes Investigation Act. That means there is to be a study of labour matters generally. As the officials of the department are making

[Mr. Ferguson.]

that study I hope they will pay attention to the suggestions that have been made by various members here tonight.

I feel that particular attention should be paid to the suggestion that has just been made by the hon. member for Cape Breton South, particularly with respect to the question of a guaranteed annual minimum wage. I shall not take the time to develop his arguments any further. I think he made the case very well. Surely all of us must recognize that those who work in industry have just as much claim to the guarantee of a year-round livelihood as have those who own industry or are its captains. There are those who may wonder just how a plan such as that could be worked out. I hold in my hand a newspaper clipping which contains several comments on this matter and at this point I think I might put on the record one paragraph which reads as follows:

The primary purpose, of course, is to stimulate management to provide steady, full-time employment throughout the year. Nobody is asking for a hand-out. What is wanted is jobs—year-round jobs.

I just thought it should be made clear that when labour is asking for consideration of the guaranteed annual minimum wage, labour is not asking for a long period of idleness. Labour is asking for the opportunity to put in a full year's work, but to have the guarantee of a year-round livelihood to which it is entitled.

I think also that the comments made by the hon. member for Cape Breton South on the question of industrial pensions should be studied. We are making progress, slow though it may be, in this country in the field of social security. I hope it will not be thought by the government that, because we have a universal old age pension plan at what is now too low a rate, that is the end of the story. I believe the hon. member for Cape Breton South is perfectly right in his suggestion that there are many industrial pension plans which have some real inadequacies. I believe it would be a real service to labour and to the community generally if the government were to give some thought to providing some sort of master plan into which these various industrial pension plans might be meshed.

I now move on to one or two other matters. In common with those who have preceded me, I welcome the announcement made by the Minister of Labour that a woman is to be appointed to a senior position in the department with the job of developing a women's bureau. I am glad to know that there is in the estimates an item for the expenses of such a women's bureau. I am sure that whoever is appointed to undertake this work will