

Labour Conditions

not understand the legal implications. I had spent half the night arranging bail for those who were in jail, so the next day I decided it would be better to arrange bail before the offences occurred.

I think it is a particularly dangerous principle we are adopting here. I believe it is one which will backfire not only on the government but on the operations of the Department of Labour with regard to their conciliation and mediation services. No one is going to trust them. I am not prepared to say the union did not know this was going to happen. I have negotiated many times and I know that quite often one says, if you go ahead it is your responsibility but we will go along with it. I have done this myself on a number of occasions. I am not saying it is or is not this way. Surely, however, we have a bigger responsibility to the over-all process of federal mediation and conciliation than to jeopardize it by the settlement of this strike in this way. In my opinion it will not be settled at all if the workers are not agreeable to accept the inquiry in a reasonable manner. There will really be nothing but trouble come out of it, as is already evident since the companies are saying they are going to apply the terms of this bill to the workers in Hamilton.

I know the minister did not intend this to happen. However, the workers in Hamilton are already on strike by reason of the fact they have been threatened in this manner. They are taking what they would call precautionary measures. I believe that this type of action may not accomplish what the minister wants to accomplish. For this reason I hope that the amendment, which is a good one, will be considered by the minister. Personally, I would be much happier if the minister would tell us he was not going to ask for third reading of this bill. He has fulfilled his commitment. I believe that if the matters into which the commissioner is inquiring can be negotiated by the two parties it would be foolish to have the federal labour department intervene. If the situation again became critical, then the minister could bring the bill forward for third reading. I believe it would be easier for conscientious members, even those in the minister's own party who have a background in labour matters, to support the bill then. People like myself who have had a background in labour relations are terrified of the idea of the government providing for compulsory arbitration and in effect eliminating the process of negotiation between labour and management.

[Mr. Peters.]

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, I will not detain the house long. I want to make three points very briefly. The first point is that this legislation demonstrates the government's sense of priorities. Yesterday the government told us that there was not time to sit a few days longer to discuss medicare, something to which the government is committed, something which the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson), the government house leader (Mr. McIlraith) and the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. MacEachen) have all said would be dealt with before a summer recess. We have not time to deal with medicare. Members are going to be on their way in a very short time to their constituencies, leaving the whole question of medicare up in the air. However, the government has ample time to deal with legislation imposing compulsory arbitration. I think the significance of that sense of values will not be lost upon the people of this country.

We are also going to leave without having done anything about additional help for old age pensioners. We had a statement from the minister today but that statement was notable for the fact that he carefully avoided setting any effective date. When I asked the minister about it he said we would find out the effective date when we saw the legislation. The old age pensioners, therefore, cannot look forward to any immediate assistance despite the fact they were promised that additional legislation would be brought in to help them. These important matters can be shelved but, according to the government, the legislation to impose certain conditions upon the dockworkers of Montreal, Quebec and Trois-Rivières must be dealt with.

The second point I want to make, Mr. Speaker, is that I am opposed to this legislation because I think it is an attempt to cover up the fact that the government has misled both the country and parliament with regard to the whole labour dispute between the Canada Shipping Federation and the International Longshoremen's Association. Hon. members know that the basic dispute did not have to do with wages. The employers offered wage increases which were acceptable to the workers. What was not acceptable was the condition attached to the offer of increased wages. This condition was a reduction of the work gangs.

The minister can use the euphonious term "increased productivity", but what was meant