

communication, cable communication, radio and television, grain operation and milling, banking, railway hotels, uranium and other mining, and so on. I point out that these industries are not in the poverty class. The banks certainly would not regard themselves as a depressed industry. Employees in industries of the kind I have listed are employees coming under federal labour jurisdiction. To pass a bill in 1971 saying that these industries are meeting the law by paying not less than \$1.75 an hour to their employees is just not good enough.

When the Minister of Labour, under the last piece of legislation on this matter, raised the minimum wage to \$1.65 an hour we had quite a bit to say about the inadequacy of that amount. We pointed out that the banks at that time were employing a large number of employees who were earning less than \$1.65 an hour. This fact was put on the record and received some publicity, and I was sent a personal letter from the president of one of the large chartered banks complaining that the global figure for all banks did not take into account the fact that some banks were not as bad as others. I am not trying to pillory any particular bank; yet even that letter said—and this is the president of that chartered bank defending his position—that there were only 550 employees who were below the \$1.65 an hour figure. Why should the banks of this country have had anybody working for less than \$1.65 an hour? If under the former legislation they had people working for less than \$1.65 an hour, we can be sure that when this new legislation comes into force all they are going to get is an increase to \$1.75 an hour. I submit it is a minimal request that the minimum wage level for all those employees who come under the federal labour code should be set at \$2 an hour. The case for this is so clear that I do not think it requires extensive debate.

● (12:30 p.m.)

I hope there will be wide support for the motion on this side of the House among all parties. The only members opposite I have been able to identify so far as to where they stand are the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie (Mr. Murphy) and the hon. member for Essex (Mr. Whelan). They both agree with me. Maybe with a short debate we can get an affirmative vote and take this sensible and reasonable step of making our federal minimum wage not less than \$2 an hour.

**Mr. C. Terrence Murphy (Sault Ste. Marie):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to participate in this debate. This bill will affect all workers under federal jurisdiction. That is common knowledge.

The federal government has jurisdiction over 7 per cent to 10 per cent of the labour force in Canada. In other words, this bill will have a direct effect on between 560,000 and 800,000 Canadians. Assuming that 50 per cent of the workers under federal jurisdiction are represented by organized labour, this bill is of the utmost importance to between 280,000 and 400,000 Canadian workers who are not represented by organized labour and therefore are without a voice at any bargaining table in the coun-

#### *Canada Labour (Standards) Code*

try. Because of this, Mr. Speaker, I feel that we in this House should provide the voice for unorganized labour and look upon this bill as we would look upon a collective agreement submitted to us for approval as representatives of the voiceless working poor.

Looking at it in this way, we must agree that this bill has many good features. There are provisions for group termination of employment, individual termination of employment, severance pay and the very novel and long awaited provision which will prohibit the dismissal of any individual because a garnishee proceeding has been instituted against him. The bill also provides for vacations with pay, statutory holidays, and 17 weeks of pregnancy leave which is a very forward-looking and progressive move.

As the last speaker pointed out, the bill has one bad feature. That is the minimum wage. As the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) said, the bill provides for an increase of only 10 cents an hour to \$1.65. This is an increase of only 6.06 per cent or \$208 a year. This increase will provide a grand total of only \$3,640 per year for those working at the minimum wage. That is a very interesting figure because the Economic Council of Canada has pointed out that the poverty line in this country for the average Canadian family is \$3,750 per year. If this legislation is passed it will provide an amount less than what the Economic Council of Canada has stated to be the minimum poverty line in this country.

If we consider ourselves as bargainers for the working poor and if we accept this 10 per cent per hour increase, we are actually saying that we are ready and willing to perpetuate poverty for all those working at the minimum level. How many are working at this level? The latest count of those working under federal jurisdiction was 11,519 employees. These are only the workers. Many thousands more are also affected because they are members of the families of these working poor.

Where do these 11,519 work? We do not know where all of them work but, as the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre pointed out, one year ago no less than 40 per cent of them were working in chartered banks throughout the country. The statements of the chartered banks which I have noticed during the past few years, at least during the past 14 months, certainly do not indicate that they are being beleaguered by creditors or anything of that sort. They are showing increases in profits ranging from 20 per cent to 35 per cent per year.

Many arguments will be advanced to support the proposition that the raise should only be 10 cents per hour. I suppose the main reason, and this is a very serious point to the government, is the fact that we will be outstripping the provincial governments which have minimal wage standards throughout the country and we will be embarrassing them if we get too far ahead. I say to the government, if that is the case it is about time we embarrassed them.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!