

afternoon to introduce this bill for second reading but, as I mentioned, it was decided on short notice.

The effect of the amendment is to put into effect the elimination of the requirement of the Department of Labour to publish the *Labour Gazette* and its companion publication *la Gazette du Travail*. It will be recalled that this enabling legislation was originally placed before the House in December, 1978, and again in October, 1979. These proposals were based mainly on the realization that the substantial cost of the two publications could no longer be justified at a time when major expenditure reductions were being ordered throughout government departments. I need scarcely point out the need for government restraint in expenditures. It is a continuing need on the part of this government, so the rationale for the earlier proposals remains just as effective today.

It would be fair to say that the *Labour Gazette* became a victim of changing tastes and technology over its 78 years of existence. For much of that time it was virtually the only journal of record in labour affairs, but in recent years several of its functions were taken up by advancements in communication methods and media, with the growth of specialized newspaper columns on labour affairs, trade and professional publications, and the electronic media, due to the high profile labour matters have continued to attract.

As a result, the role of the *Labour Gazette* evolved into a type of forum for the expression of points of view from the spectrum of participants in labour affairs, principally organized labour, management, and academics. Its audience tended to be a specialized one, and therefore a comparatively small one. It would be appropriate to note that the cost of publishing the *Labour Gazette* and *la Gazette du Travail* in the fiscal year 1979-80 was estimated at \$225,000.

● (1550)

By ceasing publication at the end of the calendar year 1978—a logical time for librarian and archival purposes—a saving of some \$83,000 was realized in the 1978-79 expenditures.

I mentioned the small size of the *Gazette's* audience: in fact the paid circulation of the *Labour Gazette* at its demise was only 2,800 copies and that of *La Gazette du Travail* just 750 copies.

Efforts were made to increase this low circulation, and the above figures actually represented an increase of some 590 copies in the *Labour Gazette's* circulation over the seven months preceding cessation.

These figures meant that while each annual subscription cost the subscriber only \$7.50 for ten issues, the production cost amounted to about \$60.00—a situation in which justifying the underwriting of more than \$50.00 per year for each subscription was indeed difficult.

Furthermore, the Department of Labour Act does not, in fact, require issuance of a publication such as that into which the *Labour Gazette* evolved. The original legislation called

#### *Department of Labour Act*

only for the publishing of statistical records. Although the later version of the *Labour Gazette* still carried statistical data, its prime role had become that of a forum. It does without saying, as well, that over the years a vast range of statistics has become available from numerous other sources.

In the Department of Labour a careful study was undertaken to determine if any alternative reductions, in either programs or services, could be made to preserve the vehicle of the *Labour Gazette*. With regret, however, no alternative was available, and in fact a number of other publications also had to be terminated to meet the required expenditure reductions.

The decision was made, therefore, after much deliberation, to cease publishing these periodicals. This had the effect of reducing 1978-79 and 1979-80 expenditures by at least the amounts I have mentioned.

I would make the point that the provision of a forum for independent labour-related opinion, as distinct from a vehicle for partisan thought, still has merit, provided it can be produced at reasonable cost. As I have indicated, there is absolutely no lessening of the real need to continue curbing financial expenditures. Nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, it should be noted that the effect of this legislation, while reacting to the restraint demands, eliminates the requirement to publish the *Labour Gazette* and *La Gazette du Travail* but does not prevent introduction of periodicals under the same or similar title if circumstances justify such action.

In the present circumstances, however, I have no option but to confirm the earlier decision to discontinue these publications.

**Hon. John A. Fraser (Vancouver South):** Mr. Speaker, I am personally astounded at the way in which the government has tried to justify the elimination of this historic and very useful document in terms of the world of labour in Canada. Frankly, I am not prepared to get into debate as to whether everyone on my side of the House agrees with me, because frankly I do not care. I was opposed to the elimination of the *Labour Gazette* when I had the privilege of serving my leader as critic on labour matters in the House of Commons. I was opposed to the elimination of the *Labour Gazette* while I had the privilege of being a minister of a government, and I am absolutely and utterly opposed to the elimination of the *Labour Gazette* today, as a member of Her Majesty's Official Loyal Opposition.

I listened with great care to the reasons put forward by the parliamentary secretary who has given a speech which, of course, is the bureaucratic answer to the request of somebody in the Department of Labour that we find some way to cut down on expenditures.

We are talking about a publication that has been in existence, not just for years but for some decades. This has been a publication, to those of us who have had the privilege of reading it over the years, which has given an insight into the world of labour in this country. I have spent a great deal of time considering this matter and I must say that this publication is second to none.