

Canada Labour Code

deaf ears but that the CPR should take on its corporate responsibility in a much more positive way, rather than shucking off employees who have put in so many years of good service.

There are a number of very important changes in this Bill about which I will not go into any great detail. I have already mentioned the consolidation of the various federal responsibilities for occupational health and safety. I believe that the provisions regarding major projects are very important because, as we come out of the recession, major projects are being undertaken all across the country. The Blair-Car report and the provisions flowing from that report are very important. The provision of the union dues check-off and the use of the Rand formula which is much more enlightened and forward looking is important. I will not attempt to deal with all of the provisions in the Bill because of time constraints.

Surely the Bill contains important provisions relating to women in the workforce. It contains provisions for leave for childcare responsibilities and for dealing with the question of sexual harassment. There are provisions dealing with the guaranteeing of incomes for handicapped and disabled persons and there are provisions related to people not being demoted, suspended or disciplined for being away from the job because of sickness or injury.

All in all, I believe there are a number of important provisions in the Bill which commend themselves to the House. In committee I am sure Hon. Members will want to make amendments to strengthen the legislation. I believe this Bill is a good start and I am pleased to see that there is much support for having this legislation implemented. We have waited a number of years to see the Bill brought before the House and I would certainly hope that it would be adopted by the end of this month and then implemented so that the employees across the country who work under federal jurisdiction could benefit from it.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Herbert): There follows a 10-minute period for questions and comments. Does anyone wish to put a question?

Mr. Murphy: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask some questions of the representative of the Liberal Government who just spoke. He mentioned the experience that he and I have had when trying to get some clarification regarding which jurisdiction the workers in Algoma fall under. We have tried to find out whether they fall under federal law or provincial law or under regulations pursuant to the Atomic Energy Control Act or the Labour Code. He said that he felt very positive about the amendment that is proposed here.

Would he not agree that, for the purposes of those in Elliot Lake, it would be better to say that the Minister could exclude them from coverage under the Canada Labour Code only where they fall under the legislation of the province as agreed to? I am afraid that we are going to end up with another situation in which many workers will be excluded from the Canada Labour Code without falling under the provisions of adequate provincial legislation.

While the Hon. Member is on his feet, perhaps he could explain on behalf of the Government why the Government feels that people who work on ships should not receive the benefit of health and safety committees. It seems to me that the 50, 60 or 100 employees on a ship are working under dangerous conditions just the same as anyone who works on land. If the rest of the provisions of the Act are to apply to these people, why should they not be entitled to the benefit of health and safety committees?

As well, perhaps the Hon. Member could explain to me why the penalties being imposed under this piece of legislation will actually make it easier and cheaper for an employer in fact to violate the law? The most obvious example of that is that the financial penalties for violating the Act to be imposed on both the employer and the employee will be exactly the same. It seems to me that a penalty of \$2,000 or \$3,000 that is imposed upon an individual can be quite severe but a penalty of \$2,000 or \$3,000 that is imposed upon Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting or another company like it would obviously be only a token penalty. It may well pay these companies to continue to ignore the law.

Mr. Foster: Mr. Speaker, I cannot believe that any Government would exclude any group of workers by order under the provisions of the Occupational Health and Safety Act. The Hon. Member is concerned that that might occur, but I do not see any problem with the amendment. I am speaking off the top of my head because I have not looked at the amendment, but I do not see that as being a problem. The important provision is that this law provides for cases such as the one which has been experienced in Ontario in which there was a jurisdictional problem.

● (1240)

Writing regulations over the years which related to the Labour Standards Code became very, very involved, cumbersome and difficult. However, the United Steel Workers, in Elliot Lake, the two mining companies, the Ontario Department of Labour, the federal Department of Labour and the Atomic Energy Control Board reached an agreement. There is a provision to exclude them under this Bill which will allow them to continue that agreement. In saying that, I would like to pay tribute to the tremendous efforts which were made both by the steelworkers and by the companies. Without the goodwill that has existed over the past four or five years, there would have been many more difficulties. The agreement is clearly a model of the way in which labour relations should be carried out in the future.

With regard to the question of the Hon. Member which related to health and safety on ships, I believe the provision indicates that there would be one individual appointed rather than a committee. Arguments could be made that a committee would be better than a safety officer, but I think that those are details which should be dealt with in the standing committee rather than in the House. Perhaps representations could be made to the Minister as to whether or not it should be a committee or a single individual. Obviously, it depends on the