

Minister as a fact. Yet when the Minister of Labour (Mr. McKnight) was in the House he said that it was a matter of contracts open to public tender. What he did not say, and probably what he did not know, was that those invited to tender were all American companies. Here we have people who were indirectly employed through a Crown corporation working on federal property who are at the whim of the invitation to tender of four American companies out of New York. When the company about which I am speaking which employs these people on federal property turned around and said: "We will have to reduce your wages by 67 per cent," there was nothing the federal Government could do about it, as far as the Minister of Labour mentioned in this House.

Mr. Tobin: Or would do.

Mr. Baker: Or would do. However, the Minister who is in the House is now attentively listening to my remarks. I wish to assure the Minister that my interest in this particular subject is because of the fear I have that what happened at Dorval and Mirabel will spread to Gander, Stephenville and St. John's, Newfoundland. That is what I was concerned about. I would not like to see employees working on federal property and coming under federal law in terms of wages and hours of work have their wages reduced by 67 per cent. Because the company in Dorval and Mirabel is owned by the same people who have the same contracts in Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and right across this country, I was afraid that it might catch on. The company would say: "Well, you know, we asked for invitations to bid without telling anyone but those in the United States of America and then we reduced everyone's salary by 67 per cent". An employee comes to me and says: "Well, look, the labour laws of Newfoundland or Quebec do not apply to us because we are on federal property". There are federal laws governing the way these employees are treated, not directly by the federal Government but indirectly by an agency of the federal Government. They are governed by federal law because they are on federal property.

● (1940)

It appears that this is a spreading phenomenon. It has got down to the work sheet. Let us take a look at the bottom line, everyone. Crown corporations and the Government of Canada treat their employees by looking at the bottom line and erasing deficits. They lay people off or reduce their wages arbitrarily. They take away their benefits and they do whatever they can to keep the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) happy until he brings down his next Budget so he will tell the business world and the so-called good corporate citizens like the ones I just mentioned a few moments ago that he will keep them happy and content.

Mr. Riis: But at what price?

Mr. Baker: The hon. gentleman asks at what price. We can see that price being paid today from Newfoundland to British Columbia. We can see the unfairness of the Treasury Board in every single contract it negotiates or refuses to negotiate or

Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act

when it designates employees and tells them to take it or leave it. It tells employees that they do not have the right to strike or to walk out. It tells the ship workers in Newfoundland and Nova Scotia that they are going to receive \$400 a month less than those who work west of 102 degrees longitude. The federal Government can get away with that, and that is what is really disturbing.

In its responsibilities to Canadians for federal property and indirect federal employees, the Government is being absolutely outrageous. Yesterday the Minister of Transport (Mr. Mazankowski) said that he could not help the deficit of the Newfoundland Railway, that Newfoundland should solve its own deficit problem but keep on with the railway. In other words, there will be lay-offs, reductions in benefits and more costs to the consumers. That is the attitude of the Government.

We are saying that the Bill before the House is a good Bill, a great Bill. It takes at least one step, but it does not go all the way. When the Government is in the process of classifying these people and allocating their wages, which is the first job it will have to do, it should, for goodness' sake, look at what it is doing to other federal employees or, more correctly, to employees who are indirectly employed by the federal Government, either on federal property or by Crown corporations. This is the sector for which the Canada Labour Code is supposed to function in an honourable way.

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, I have a short question for the Hon. Member. All Hon. Members are suffering from a collective mania. We are suffering because of a misunderstanding. The Hon. Member for Gander—Twillingate (Mr. Baker) rose in his place and told Hon. Members that Air Canada, which flies airplanes displaying Canadian flags, has tendered to American companies but not to Canadian companies to do refuelling for Air Canada. We also misunderstood and obviously misheard the Hon. Member when he said that the contract went to an American company which is servicing in Canada a Crown corporation and paying Canadian workers 67 per cent less.

Would the Hon. Member tell us that we are all having a bad dream? Would he pinch us and wake us up?

Mr. Baker: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member is absolutely incorrect. He did not misunderstand me at all. He heard me absolutely correctly, and I defy anyone to tell me that I am wrong because I have gone into this matter. Not only that but I have gone to the registry of companies to find out just who is involved both in the United States and in Canada.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I regret to interrupt the Hon. Member but questions and comments are now terminated.

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—Port au Port—St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, I was not intending to rise in my place to take part in debate on Bill C-45. However, the spindles in my brain were well greased as I listened to the eloquent plea of the Hon. Member for Gander—Twillingate (Mr. Baker) on behalf of