

*Vacation Leave Bill*

While checking into the background of Bill C-14 it was very interesting to read the debates in *Hansard* on similar bills that the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre introduced in recent years. In August, 1964, the hon. member moved second reading of a bill to provide for three weeks vacation with pay to all those workers in Canada under federal jurisdiction, including railway, transportation and communication workers, bank employees, etc., as long as they had been employed by the same employer for five years.

The relevant federal legislation at that time provided for one week's vacation after one year's employment and for two weeks vacation after two years employment. The government speakers in that debate stated, among other things, that since a comprehensive labour code was going to be introduced by the Liberal government in the near future, amendments of this kind should not be made piece by piece in the meantime.

In 1965 the Canada Labour (Standards) Code was passed by parliament, which among other things provided for two weeks annual vacation with pay for all workers under federal jurisdiction who had worked for the same employer for one year. Then in March, 1967, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre moved second reading of a bill similar to the one now before us, calling for three weeks vacation after working for three years for the same employer. In October, 1967, a similar bill was again brought forward by the hon. member.

While only about one-tenth of the labour force in Canada comes under federal jurisdiction and the remaining 90 per cent under provincial jurisdiction, all labour legislation passed in Ottawa is important, not only because of its direct effect on the 10 per cent under federal jurisdiction but also because it should show the way for the provinces and give them the incentive to provide better minimum labour legislation for the 90 per cent of employees directly under their jurisdiction.

I believe the federal government should definitely lead the way in reform labour legislation, as in reform legislation of all kinds. However, since such federal labour legislation tends to be so influential on similar provincial legislation, the federal legislation has to be well considered and realistic because of its effect on the whole economy of our country.

[Mr. Weatherhead.]

• (5:20 p.m.)

As has been pointed out, only one province, Saskatchewan, requires three weeks paid holidays, and that after five years of employment, while four provinces require two weeks holidays, four provinces require one week's holidays, and one has no legislation dealing with annual vacations at all.

In the 1967 survey prepared by the Canadian Department of Labour only 12 per cent of non-office employees and 22 per cent of office employees in all industries received three weeks vacation with pay after working less than five years. The same 1967 survey shows that in industries under federal jurisdiction only 5.1 per cent of non-office employees and 6.6 per cent of office employees received three weeks vacation after working less than five years. Accordingly, an amendment to our Canada Labour (Standards) Code making three weeks vacation compulsory after only three years service would be too sudden an economic change, not only for the industries under federal jurisdiction but also too sudden for the provinces to implement in the near future for the industries under their jurisdiction.

I am sure everyone in the house is generally in favour of longer and longer vacations with pay, and with the rapid increase of automation and the resulting increased productivity of each worker there is no doubt that paid vacation periods will become longer and longer. I hope and expect that federal labour legislation will be in the forefront in promoting this. I do not wish to be harsh but while the general intent of the hon. member's bill is commendable, it shows the lack of practicality and responsibility which members of his party often portray, because they know that they will never have to assume the reins of government and so will never have to try to carry out any of their proposed legislation. It would have been just as easy and had as much practical effect if the hon. member had proposed three weeks holidays after two years service or three weeks holidays after one year's service since the hon. member knows that he will never have to take the responsibility for any such legislation as a member of a government party.

In addition to two weeks paid vacation after one year of service the Canada Labour (Standards) Code also insists on eight legal holidays with pay as a minimum requirement for industries under federal jurisdiction. The provisions in the Canada Labour (Standards) Code are, of course minimum provisions and