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dues check-off regime that will apply. This permissive approach has been a cause of conflict during many negotiations over first collective agreements.

I want to end my remarks today by commending the Government on both the content of its labour reform package and the process by which it put the package together, albeit it took an incredibly long time. In my opinion, the amendments are fair, progressive and in line with the economic and social realities of the 1980s. This should not be entirely surprising considering that the Minister and his officials met with some 40 labour organizations and employer's associations representing all sectors under the jurisdiction of the Code. I am extremely pleased with the reactions to the amendments. Generally they have been quite positive. Members will know, for instance, that the CLC expressed approval. The Public Service Alliance has termed the Bill a firm step in the right direction. However, the business community has not been as supportive as some of us on this side of the House, but I believe it will come to realize the social necessity for the reforms and adapt accordingly. As I suggested earlier, it is in the employer's own interest to have a collective bargaining system that functions smoothly and a workforce that feels its legitimate needs are being met. It is my sincere hope that all Parties will agree to speedy passage of these amendments through this House.

I just wanted to refer to a remark made by a previous speaker concerning the Hon. Member for Kootenay West (Mr. Kristiansen). I want to assure the House that for many years this particular Member of the NDP was one of the forerunners in organizing unions in the forestry sector throughout Atlantic Canada.

**Mr. Kristiansen:** Mr. Speaker, would the Hon. Member or his Government be prepared to agree to a proposition that there be one speaker from each Party or one day of debate on second reading of this Bill, and set a timetable for the Bill in committee with an assurance that we would have it reported back with an agreement for either one day of debate on third reading or one speaker from each Party? Immediately following passage in the House it could be proclaimed before Parliament recesses. He may not be able to do that, of course, and the Government may not be able to make the decision because a new Prime Minister may have to make it. But we would like some assurance that in any negotiations which take place later today or tomorrow, no other conditions tied to any other legislation will be forthcoming from the Government. Obstacles will not come from this Party, certainly at this point, and I would like that assurance from some Member on the other side. What the Conservatives will do, God only knows, but the Government has our assurance, and I would like an assurance from over there.

**Mr. Baker:** Mr. Speaker, all I can say is that I know for a fact that the Minister responsible for this legislation wants it through at the earliest possible moment. However, I think there is going to be somewhat of a problem at committee stage. There are various interest groups in Canada which will

want to make representations concerning this legislation. I do not think that in this particular case it is the unions which will want to do so because they have supported the legislation as a step in the right direction. I think the problem Members will encounter will be that the business interests will want to be heard publicly.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** There being no further questions or comments, the House will proceed to debate.

**Hon. Flora MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to what the Hon. Member for Gander-Twillingate (Mr. Baker) had to say and I commend him for his interest in these amendments, as well as those others who have spoken on this very important Opposition Day debate. I want to commend as well the Hon. Member for Fraser Valley West (Mr. Wenman) for having brought the motion forward, because it is important that we debate these amendments to the Canada Labour Code.

The Hon. Member who just finished speaking mentioned that it had taken a very long time to bring these changes forward. That is true. I was thinking of this when I was looking at the record going back over the times in committee when we raised this question again and again. It was struck by just how long these amendments had been in seeing the light of day. I looked at my records and I discovered that this issue has been raised for the first time in the Standing Committee on Labour, Manpower and Immigration on May 21, 1981, over three years ago. It was raised at that time by my colleague from Don Valley West who was then the Conservative Party's critic on labour matters. In responding to his question as to when the new amendments might be expected, the then Minister of Labour, who is the present Minister of International Trade (Mr. Regan), said the following, as reported in issue No. 5 of the committee report:

● (1710)

This review, which in my opinion has been painstaking and comprehensive, will shortly emerge as a package of amendments to the code and will substantially involve employment safety, conditions of employment, improving matters of specific concern to women and minority groups, and dispute settlement.

He went on to say:

At this particular stage, I would seek the indulgence of the honourable members if I do not go into the exact details of the package. The appropriate place for this, of course, will be its introduction in the House which I hope will be in the near future.

That was the then Minister of Labour speaking in May, 1981 in response to questions and entreaties from the Hon. Member for Don Valley West (Mr. Bosley), a Conservative Member of Parliament. I went through more of the records of that committee because I sat on it at that time and had been involved in discussions. I recall the numerous times the Hon. Member for Rosedale (Mr. Crombie) raised the question of when these amendments could be expected to be brought forward. In the House earlier this year and in committee last year the Hon. Member for Perth (Mr. Jarvis) raised the question of when these amendments would be introduced in the House. I mention the number of times this issue has been