

representatives of the people in Parliament. Because here we can publicly debate the issues and the pros and cons of what is required in the public interest and what is fair to the employers and employees in relation to the public interest, and thus the individual situation can be assessed.

Fortunately, in my view, we are retaining that kind of approach in this bill. I suggest that if either in the preamble or any other part of the bill it is suggested that we take an approach similar to the one taken in the province of British Columbia, we would be sowing the seeds of deep-rooted trouble for the future as far as any hope for a real and lasting industrial peace is concerned.

Perhaps I am straying as far away from the subject matter of this motion as did the hon. member for Edmonton West, so let me come to the preamble itself which the hon. member is proposing to delete. Some of the questions raised about its position in law have already been dealt with by other hon. members and I shall not repeat them. I was, as member of the committee know, responsible for moving the deletion of the preamble during the committee stage.

**Mr. Alexander:** I was waiting for that.

**Mr. Barnett:** To assist the hon. member for Hamilton West (Mr. Alexander) perhaps I should quote part of what I said, as reported at page 20:23 of the Minutes of Proceedings for June 20 last:

Whenever I find myself looking at one of these rather flowery preambles to a piece of legislation, I think of it as being a continuation of what I call the Pickersgillian fad. I say that because the former member for Bonavista-Twillingate as minister of transport seemed to initiate this idea—

Perhaps I was a little out there; he revised it. As pointed out in one of the quotations of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), apparently this was something that used to prevail but which fell out of fashion. Then I went on to say that I did not think these preambles really meant very much. As pointed out by other members tonight, I too pointed out that in law they really had not very much effect, and I went on to say that I did not think the habit of putting this sort of thing in front of bills had much value. Members of the House may be interested to know that when asked to comment, the deputy minister of labour said that it was probably true that they did not have very much effect in law, but that if they had no more effect than that he could not see any particular harm in leaving them in bills.

Quite frankly, I have not altered my view about this practice. The sentiments expressed are laudable enough in most cases and I do not quarrel with them. Nevertheless, I think that what has been put forward as a serious suggestion by the hon. member for Timiskaming (Mr. Peters) and the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre is worthy of consideration. If what is said here is intended to mean anything, then let it be incorporated in the legislation itself. This is a serious proposition worthy of discussion and consideration, even though it might involve a little redrafting of the phraseology of the preamble.

As I have read the bill, I think it would add something to have some of the matters stated in the preamble made part of the bill. To take one example, though this is not perhaps a key point, mention is made of the government

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of Canada having ratified a convention. I do not know offhand whether Parliament has ever ratified it, but the present wording might be made more appropriate if it were phrased in such a way as to read that Parliament had given its support to the convention.

I think what is implied here is a recognition by employers that collective bargaining is supported and should be supported in this country. Yet as I read the law there is no provision to the effect that employers are bound to recognize collective bargaining. There is a pious sentiment here about a recognition of collective bargaining as a basis for arriving at settlements between employers and employees. If that were a proposition that could be considered, then certainly I would support it. However, quite frankly, despite what some of my colleagues have said as well as some of the arguments advanced, particularly by the hon. member for Edmonton West, in support of the motion put forward by the hon. member for Hamilton West, I have not changed the views that I expressed in committee about putting what I still feel are but pious sentiments in front of a bill.

• (2110)

**Hon. Martin P. O'Connell (Minister of Labour):** Mr. Speaker, I want first to recognize that this bill came upon us this afternoon rather unexpectedly. This circumstance arose when one hon. member of this House declined to give unanimous consent to our proceeding with third reading of the bill then before us.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** A member from your side.

**Mr. O'Connell:** It did come a little unexpectedly, although the quality of debate has not suffered for that reason. No doubt that is because this bill has really been before all of us who have been interested in it for perhaps a year. A similar bill was introduced about this time last June. There have been many meetings, and many briefs have been heard. The minister has met with many delegations and listened to their points of view. The bill went through a very good second reading debate in the House and received great support. There were 24 hearings of the standing committee and 20 or so delegations appeared before that committee. No doubt that has all helped us to get a good start on it this afternoon.

I want to address myself to some of the points made in respect of the preamble. We are looking at these questions because the hon. member for Hamilton West (Mr. Alexander) has moved that the preamble be deleted. What does a preamble do? The preamble is here because it sets forth the faith of this government in the principles underlying this bill. Let me draw hon. members' attention to this fact. The preamble gives weight and recognition to employers and employees as participants to the collective bargaining process which the bill underwrites. It stresses freedom of association and free collective bargaining as effective bases for industrial relations in Canada.

I should like to draw hon. members' attention to the fourth paragraph of the preamble. It means just what it says, that Parliament desires, and expresses the desire here, to continue and extend its support to labour and management in their co-operative efforts to develop good