

Labour Conditions

major importance, would the minister be prepared to meet with these people in Vancouver as a group, and not individually, at his early convenience? Will the minister answer that question?

Mr. Nicholson: I think these cases will have to be dealt with now on an individual basis. I would be prepared to meet with them individually rather than as a group.

Mr. Winch: May I ask why you will not meet them collectively?

LABOUR CONDITIONS**MEASURE RESPECTING HOURS OF WORK,
MINIMUM WAGES, ETC.**

The house resumed, from Tuesday, October 13, consideration of the motion of Mr. MacEachen for the second reading of Bill No. C-126, respecting hours of work, minimum wages, annual vacations and holidays with pay in federal works, undertakings and businesses.

Mr. J. C. Munro (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, for a few minutes prior to the house rising last night I had been speaking about the new Canada labour standards code introduced by the minister yesterday. The essence of my introductory remarks at that time was by way of complimenting the government and the minister for bringing forward this type of progressive legislation which is badly needed. I referred also by way of introduction to the main elements of the bill. Provision is made for a minimum wage of \$1.25 per hour, to limit the number of working hours per day to eight and the number of working days per week to five, the total number of hours in a working week to 40. Provision is made also for overtime pay over that number of hours per week to the total of eight. Seven statutory holidays have been provided, and if work is performed on those days provision is made for overtime pay. The only remaining feature of the bill with respect to standards is the provision with respect to two weeks vacation for each year of employment with pay, or in lieu thereof 4 per cent of his wages if he has not worked for a total of one year.

These standards are generally in line with all the presentations that have been made to this government, and are in line with our commitments. I think that in the discussion that ensued yesterday with regard to this bill, the two general features of the bill could have been dealt with in greater detail. The two

general features, as I see them, are the elements relating to the minimal nature of the standards and the scope of the bill in its application to the number of people under federal jurisdiction, and the constitutional jurisdiction that has been assumed by this legislation. There were several references yesterday by hon. members to this measure as setting a standard. I feel it would be more accurate to say that the bill sets a minimum standard in relation to the five elements I mentioned earlier. In this way it is designed to be example setting legislation for other jurisdictions in our country.

The second, and what I consider to be the more novel, general feature of this bill is the number of people in Canada under federal jurisdiction to whom it applies in the labour field. As we all know, under the British North America Act our legislative scope in this area is severely limited. When we look at other labour legislation dealing with standards—and I am not talking now about legislation dealing with labour relations—we see that the Fair Wages and Hours of Labour Act applies essentially to employees who work for a contractor who has a federal contract and the federal government is of course, one of the principal contracting parties to that arrangement. This act does not affect directly federal employees of crown corporations or employees of the federal government, nor employees in industries, private or otherwise, falling under federal jurisdiction so it is quite limited in its scope. The only other type of legislation that I believe is noteworthy in the federal area which deals with standards is the Annual Vacations Act, and I understand that it affects only federal employees directly. However, I believe that particular measure does not have the scope of this particular bill, because the bill we have before us applies to national industries whether they be privately owned or otherwise, falling under federal jurisdiction as outlined in clause 3, the application clause of the bill. The industries, businesses or firms affected, generally fall under the headings to which the minister referred yesterday, namely transport, communications, banking, uranium mining, grain elevators and certain works carried on by federal government corporations. I believe, by way of example, reference could be made to Polymer, the Canadian National, C.B.C., the national film board and so on. When we look at this bill and understand the application of the section applies to private industries within federal jurisdiction, we can see that the scope of this measure is as wide indeed as the federal

[Mr. Winch.]