

will not be penalized as a result of this noble and important task she fulfils in our society. Consequently, the proposed amendments are concerned first of all with the period of continuous service required to be eligible for pregnancy leave. This period will be reduced from one year to three months. As a result, any employee who has been working at least three months for a company that is governed by the Canada Labour Code or who is working for the Canadian Government, will be eligible for pregnancy leave after three months' employment. This leave of absence which under the present legislation was seventeen weeks will now be increased by a period of leave in addition to the seventeen-week pregnancy leave. We are adding a leave of absence of twenty-four weeks for child care, which means that the mother who has a child and wants to take care of that child during the first months, during the time right after birth when the child needs its mother most, these mothers will now be able to take a leave of absence of forty-one weeks. In our modern society, however, it has now been recognized that both parents may participate actively in taking care of the children, and increasingly, fathers are sharing this responsibility.

That is why we have decided, with respect to the additional twenty-four weeks allowed for child care, to allow either parent to take the leave of absence. For instance, the mother could take the first twelve weeks and the father the remaining twelve of this additional twenty-four week period.

We also recognize the fact that whether a baby is born into the family or adopted, it needs special care. Consequently, pursuant to the proposed legislative amendments, this 24-week child care leave would be granted whether the child is natural or adopted.

More significant still, we have introduced a whole series of amendments to improve the job security of a mother who is temporarily forced to quit her job as a result of pregnancy. That is why we have strengthened the leave conditions and the guarantees that the mother will resume employment without losing the benefits to which she would normally have been entitled had she remained at work.

Considering that in our new and contemporary society there are ever more women in the labour force or a sizeable number of them who work on a part-time basis, we wanted to make sure that the annual paid leave of part-time employees will be covered just as if they were working full-time. Certain anomalies will thus be eliminated so that all part-time employees will be eligible for annual paid leave calculated on the basis of their working time.

I should like to refer briefly to the amendments related to sexual harassment. We acknowledge that any working individual is entitled to full respect for his or her dignity as a human being and that he or she must not come under any undue and unacceptable pressure in our modern society, nor should he or she be subjected to blackmail with respect to promotion or preferred treatment. That is why the Canada

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Labour Code will contain a very specific definition of sexual harassment. Employers will be expected to make a mandatory policy statement on sexual harassment, and indeed to make sure that sanctions and penalties will be imposed should there be evidence of sexual harassment in the work place. We feel that such provisions flow from the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and we believe that those amendments to the Canada Labour Code will guarantee that all Canadian workers, men and women alike, will be better protected.

A series of amendments to Part IV of the Canada Labour Code have to do with work safety. We think that those amendments are very important because, for the first time, the Labour Code will cover all workers and all Government employees, a measure which had been strongly advocated by all major Canadian unions and more particularly by Canada's Labour Code will henceforth apply to transport and offshore resource-based industries as well as to all people who work aboard aircraft and ships or who belong to the Public Service of Canada. What will be interesting is that, wherever there are more than 20 employees, we shall require that there be work safety and health committees; these committees will be mandatory, and the Act will specify the responsibilities of both employer and employees in the area of work safety and health.

● (1230)

It is a fact, Mr. Speaker, that there are too many accidents on the job and that lives are lost and serious injuries occur in the work place because of negligence. If we could cut down significantly the number of days lost because of work-related injuries, we would all benefit from it. I therefore submit that the amendments we are proposing to Part IV of the Canada Labour Code will be a step in the right direction to ensure that employers and employees will assume their responsibilities in a more serious way where work safety and health are concerned.

Finally, we will be proposing a series of amendments to Part V of the Canada Labour Code to ensure that the work of the Canada Labour Relations Board is done more efficiently and is better coordinated with regard to the objectives set when the board was appointed. Certain amendments are to be proposed to the provisions on technological change to ensure that the workers are better informed by their employers of their plans to implement technological changes.

In closing, I would like to remind the House that the Government is suggesting the mandatory deduction of union dues, which has long been requested by the unions. I therefore believe that this series of amendments is justified and long overdue, and I hope that all the Members of this House will soon be approving them.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Guilbault): Order, please. Are there any questions or comments? The Hon. Member for Surrey-White Rock-North Delta (Mr. Friesen).