

Private Members' Business

I know the word "scabs" is used. I never had the opportunity where I was on the payroll, so to speak, of such a corporation. I am sure many in this hall have never been on the payroll of a Crown corporation or a federal department—maybe some. My point is, however, that those who have been paid over the years by a corporation have sustained a fairly balanced, and probably a better, package than those in the private sector.

Generally speaking, federal Crown corporations look after their workers pretty well. It is based on tradition. It is not like the private sector. Federal administrators are not as conscious of profit-making. They are not geared the same way. The net result is that the packages to the workers are generally fairly lucrative compared to others.

To suggest that when a disruption takes place, no alternative worker be allowed to take over affects the services of so many other Canadians to their financial detriment. In effect, they are saying: "We will force the Crown corporation of the government to come to their knees." I do not think that is a responsible Canadian agreement.

There are those occasions when one would tend automatically to say: "Well, that's it. We're shutting this thing down. Nobody else can come in until we get exactly what we want." In looking at what the demands are, they are not an inflationary increase in wages. They are not just an extra few days. But every time I have heard what the union demanded, I could not believe it. It would be something such as a 30 per cent pay increase. They tell me that they have to ask for that because management will offer substantially less. Somehow they try to meet half way.

Those are the scary things that happen in our society. We play these shell games between management and labour, which leaves us all totally frustrated. I accept that this should be discussed in a common place like our House of Commons on a regular basis, and I accept there are other points of view.

On top of that, I sincerely believe that collectively we should find ways out of these disruptions before asking for the most ridiculous amounts of money to settle strikes or the most ridiculous kinds of things we hear, maybe from management as well sitting so tightly.

My position is that I cannot support this private intervention on this basis.

Mr. Robert D. Nault (Kenora—Rainy River): Mr. Speaker, first I would like to thank the member who brought this bill forward. It gives us an opportunity to talk to particular areas of the legislation which I think are very meaningful.

Under Bill C-201, if it is read very carefully, there are two portions to the bill. One is the anti-scab legislation and the other is the central service legislation which in effect has a two-tier mechanism as it relates to this particular piece of legislation we are talking to.

First of all I would like to indicate the good news. I think the anti-scab legislation has some merit. The reason is that in this party we understand that there are certain corporations, be they private or Crown corporations, that are within their beliefs that using scabs during a strike is of importance in order to maintain the company or to carry on with its service. That is why I say to the members opposite that the anti-scab legislation portion has some merit.

The difficulty I have with this bill is simply the essential service part. Mr. Speaker, when you take a look at the bill and break it down, it relates particularly just to Crown corporations. If members opposite would look back into the history of Crown corporations, one of the reasons we put it at arm's length to the government was to allow it to do business in a private sector world in the same manner that a private company would.

Having said that, putting in legislation that would tie the arms of one particular corporation because it is a Crown corporation versus a corporation in the private sector would create some phenomenal problems. For that reason, I think this particular piece of legislation would not carry much weight in the labour movement, in business for that matter, or in the Crown corporations themselves.

One thing I found very interesting in the intervention of the sponsoring member of this bill was his discussion about Canada Post and the fact that Canada Post is probably one of the biggest problems in the Crown corporation world that this government has as it relates to scabs.

When I read this piece of legislation, it almost seems like it is tailor-made for Canada Post. The fact remains that when there are disruptions between management