

Industrial Relations

provide for pay for statutory holidays for employees and for pay for work performed on statutory holidays.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I am very happy on this occasion to send to the house for endorsement in principle a bill which I am very pleased to note has been endorsed not only by the C.C.F. section of the house but also, on December 13, 1957, by the Liberal and Conservative parties. I therefore aim to be very brief indeed, so that we might have a vote at an early hour of the day.

The aim of the bill, if I may be allowed, Mr. Speaker, to read the explanatory note, is:

—to provide that all employees in Canada who come under federal labour jurisdiction shall receive their regular pay for at least eight statutory holidays each year, without having to work on those holidays. It also provides that when any such employee is required to work on any statutory holiday, as defined in the bill, he shall receive pay for such work at double time in addition to his regular pay for such holiday.

Nothing in this bill affects any provision for statutory holidays with pay enjoyed by any employees where such provisions are more favourable than those enjoyed herein, but this bill does supersede any provisions which are less favourable than those set out in this bill.

My reason for taking an interest in this matter, goes back several years when I noticed the resentment of federal civil servants at being forced to work on December 26, commonly known as Boxing Day, a day on which most other employees in Canada receive a holiday. I know the bill has nothing to do with December 26 in that it is not one of the eight days mentioned in the bill. However, I welcome the bill because it will at least give some measure of assurance to such section of the labour force as comes under federal jurisdiction that they will not be ignored in the matter of holidays which most Canadians are able to observe. The house will note that 90 per cent of the labour force of Canada comes within the jurisdiction of the provincial governments. Many of them have not yet made any arrangements in their labour laws in this regard. However, we feel this federal government ought to be an example by way of being an exemplary employer in the Dominion of Canada, and if this house would adopt the bill now before us, we feel it would not be very long until each of the provincial governments also made provisions of like measure in their local labour laws.

The argument has often been used before that this is a matter which should be left to the normal process of collective bargaining. Mr. Speaker, we realize that many employers in Canada who come under national labour laws have already recognized this obvious need of employees to have the same national holidays as the rest of us. There

are agreements which have been reached with employers which even exceed what is contained in this bill. However, Mr. Speaker, we have to be realistic and recognize that there are always a number of employers, fortunately only a limited number, who in the absence of legislation will take advantage of existing situations and will not recognize the need for adequate concessions in handling their employees.

I was looking over what happened the last time the bill was before the house, when it was at that time introduced by the former member for Winnipeg North Centre. After his introduction of the bill I was very pleased to note that the hon. member for Danforth (Mr. Small), who I see is not yet in the house, said:

I do not think there will be much disagreement with the principle of this bill as outlined by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre with regard to the granting of eight statutory holidays a year with pay to those who come under federal labour jurisdiction.

And then, later, he says this as recorded on page 2344 of *Hansard* of December 13, 1957:

I would propose that we endeavour to arrange to have one statutory holiday occur in each month of the year.

In other words, he thought Mr. Knowles was being over modest and that we should enact legislation which would enable workers to have one statutory holiday each month rather than only eight over the period of one year. Later on, the hon. member expressed some hope about the inevitability of this proposed law or act when he said, as reported on the same page: "If we work toward this end, we shall obtain it".

On page 2347 of *Hansard* of the same day we find the hon. member for Halifax (Mr. McCleave) expressing his opinion in the same debate. He said:

I too should like to speak on the excellent bill introduced by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles).

We also had a speech from a representative of the Liberal section in this house, the then member for Kootenay East, Mr. Byrne, who said as reported on page 2346:

The hon. member has left me just about enough time to say that I am in favour of the principle of the bill, and if it should pass I should certainly like to see it go to the committee on industrial relations for further study.

The bill is necessarily a lengthy one. It is involved, and I do not mind the industrial relations committee of this house making amendments to it. I should be very happy, upon the adoption of the principle of the bill on second reading, to move that it be referred to the standing committee on industrial relations and I plead with hon. members to not