

West Coast Ports Operations Act

Mr. Deans: Mr. Chairman, I do not care. I was not going to eat anyway.

Mr. Cook: Mr. Chairman, I felt I should rise for one moment only. I was asked by the Hon. Member for Vancouver-Kingsway, who agreed with me on some matters, why I am voting for the Bill. I will tell him why I am voting for it. It is for the very reason that all of us are here tonight—to get this ruddy Bill through and, in the interests of Canada, to get the ports open.

Some Hon. Members: Let's go, let's go!

Mr. Cook: I only hope we could stop having long speeches by Members of the New Democratic Party which are delaying consideration in Committee of the Whole and delaying the entire procedure of getting the ports open in the best interests of Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kristiansen: Mr. Chairman, in spite of those provocations, which I do not take very seriously, I want to ask the Minister a very simple question but one which goes to the essence of the problem facing us.

I think Hon. Members on all sides of the House would agree that the principles at stake—not just money, time and jobs—are important ones. If we are to be asked to consider a piece of legislation which transgresses on certain fundamental freedoms that are held very closely by many people, we should know exactly what it is we are considering and what we are either voting for or voting against. I do not think that is too much to ask. Therefore, I ask the Minister—his officials are here and other Members of the Government are present—are we dealing with legislation that will put into place 6 per cent and 5 per cent increases, or are we dealing here with legislation which will provide a 9 per cent increase for the first six months and then the six and five formula will apply, or what is it we are dealing with?

● (1910)

I would like a clear answer to that question. It is the Government's law. The Government is asking us to transgress on certain people's rights. I think we have a right and a responsibility not only to ask that question but to get an answer to it. If we cannot have a very clear answer, then I think the Government has absolutely unmitigated gall to place such a proposition before us.

Miss Carney: Mr. Chairman, I rise on a point of order. Before the Minister answers the question put by the Hon. Member for Kootenay West, could he answer my question, which is: Why can he not support the traditional methods of dealing with this kind of problem through arbitration rather than the imposition of a Bill which is not designed to cover labour-management disputes in the private sector?

The Deputy Chairman: Hon. Members will realize that is not an effective point of order, but I do think there is a courtesy in that it may be recalled that the Hon. Member had a question earlier.

Mr. Caccia: Mr. Chairman, as to the first question asked by the Hon. Member for Kootenay West, the Public Sector Compensation Restraint Act will prevail. He will recall that for agreements expiring before June 28, 1982 increases of 9 per cent, 6 per cent and 5 per cent will apply. As I understand it, a 9 per cent increase will apply for the portion of this year which precedes June 28.

As to the question of the Hon. Member for Vancouver Centre, and I am sorry I did not sense she had a question in her intervention earlier, otherwise I would have replied, but I think she is posing the substance of the amendment put forward by the Hon. Member for Rosedale. I would be glad to deal with it but it is not before us. I was waiting for the Chairman to rule at which point we would be dealing with it. For the sake of saving the time of the House, I was waiting for that matter to be before us so we can debate it. I will deal with it when the matter is before us.

Mr. Taylor: Do it now.

The Deputy Chairman: The Hon. Member for Kootenay West is rising on a point of order?

Mr. Kristiansen: No, not on a point of order, Mr. Chairman. I am rising on a point of clarification.

The Deputy Chairman: Then I will have to recognize other Hon. Members who have not yet spoken.

Mr. Robinson (Burnaby): Mr. Chairman, I have a question for the Minister. However, first I want to make a couple of points with respect to the particular Clause that is before us. In my view, this Clause and the imposition of the six and five formula on the private sector and on these particular employers and employees constitutes the most serious assault on free collective bargaining that we have seen in this country for many, many years.

We have heard from representatives of the Official Opposition and we have heard from my colleague, the Hon. Member for North Vancouver-Burnaby, that this action is a mistake. Yet what utter hypocrisy! On the one hand, the Official Opposition support the six and five formula for the public sector, yet when that formula is being applied to the private sector suddenly we hear the Hon. Member for Vancouver Centre, for example, suggesting that this action will reduce productivity. What hypocrisy! If such a formula is good enough in the minds of the Official Opposition for the public sector, presumably it is good enough for the private sector as well.

What does this legislation do to the principle of free collective bargaining and to the freedom of association, which supposedly this Government and this Parliament guaranteed in the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms? What we are saying is that people have the right to free collective