

## Canada Labour (Standards) Code

## EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

## REQUEST FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF PASSPORT OFFICE IN MARITIME PROVINCES

**Mr. Robert McCleave (Halifax-East Hants):** I direct my question to the Acting Prime Minister in his capacity as Secretary of State for External Affairs. Now that regional passport offices have been in operation for some time and presumably their worth has been established, would the minister reconsider and hopefully establish one for Atlantic Canada?

**Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, we are keeping this situation under constant review. Obviously the establishment of regional offices has been very useful and we will be considering whether they should be extended. Certainly the Atlantic provinces would be high on the list.

● (12:20 p.m.)

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

## CANADA LABOUR (STANDARDS) CODE

## AMENDMENTS RESPECTING HOURS OF WORK, WAGES, VACATIONS, TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT, ETC.

The House proceeded to the consideration of Bill C-228, to amend the Canada Labour (Standards) Code, as reported (with amendments) from the Standing Committee on Labour, Manpower and Immigration.

**Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre)** moved:

That Bill C-228, An Act to amend the Canada Labour (Standards) Code, be amended by deleting from clause 7 the words "one dollar and seventy-five cents an hour" and by substituting therefor the words "two dollars an hour".

He said: Mr. Speaker, this amendment ought to be so readily acceptable that I should not need to speak for very long in support of it. I am happy to see opposite me this morning my good friend, the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie (Mr. Murphy). A few days ago, in addition to the motion in my name which has just been moved there was an amendment on the order paper in his name asking for the same increase that my motion seeks. Since my motion happened to be ahead of his, I suppose he thought he might as well withdraw his. If his had remained on the order paper, I would have been happy to ask him to second my motion. I trust that his presence in the House this morning means that he will support my motion.

May I in just a sentence or two say that we regard Bill C-228 as a good piece of legislation. It is one of those bills in which there is practically nothing that we can oppose. The only thing wrong with it is that certain provisions are not included in it and, in some instances, the bill does not go far enough. My motion focuses on one of the major shortcomings of the bill in that it provides for the minimum wage to be set at only \$1.75 an hour. My motion proposes that that figure should be set at \$2 an hour.

[Mr. Speaker.]

I know the Minister of Labour (Mr. Mackasey) will argue that not many months ago the minimum wage was \$1.25 an hour and that it was pretty good for the Liberal party to have raised it in two jumps to \$1.75 an hour. I suppose that was pretty good for the Liberal party but it is not very good for those who have to live on the minimum wage.

**Mr. Whelan:** What do the provinces do?

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** I hear my good friend from down Windsor way who, like me, prefers to stay in this House—we welcome his vote cast yesterday against the Senate—asking what the provinces do. No doubt that will be one of the arguments raised in this debate. May I say that it is the job of this House to give a lead in these matters. I do not think we should hold back because any province, whether its government is Liberal, Conservative, NDP or what have you, has not come up to this standard. I hope that this House will set a high enough standard so that the governments of Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, Saskatchewan, British Columbia and all the rest of the provinces of Canada will follow suit.

**Mr. Whelan:** Agreed.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** My hon. friend and I are on good terms this morning. I now have two supporters on the other side of the House. I thank the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie for proposing an amendment similar to mine and I thank the hon. member for Essex (Mr. Whelan) for saying that he is in agreement with me. If I can get the support of the Minister of Labour I will not need to go any farther.

A wage of \$1.75 an hour for a person working a full week of 40 hours provides an income of only \$70 a week. If that person were to work for 50 weeks in the year, allowing him a couple of weeks for holidays—I do not know how anybody earning that little could afford a holiday—that person would earn only \$3,500 a year. Surely I do not have to make the point that this is below the poverty line.

I remind the Minister of Labour that he himself was responsible for a piece of legislation that we passed a few days ago which provides for unemployment insurance benefits of up to \$100 a week. I readily admit that that figure applies only in the case of those who normally earn \$150 a week. At any rate, the minister did his best to provide unemployment insurance at the level of \$100 a week. Surely it is not good enough for him now to be asking us to be satisfied with a minimum wage that provides only \$70 a week for a man who works a full week or \$3,500 for a man working a 50-week work year.

I remind the House that, although labour legislation is partly federal and partly provincial and although 90 per cent of the work force of Canada comes under provincial jurisdiction, some very important areas of our economy come entirely under federal labour jurisdiction. If I may name some of them, they include railway transport and services, air transport and services, water transport and services, services incidental to transportation, telephone