

Government Orders

Heaven knows, there are always plenty of things wrong, particularly when we deal with an operation the size of the one that we are referring to. As a matter of fact, I would venture to say that it is amazing there has not been a strike well before this.

Mr. Vincent: There are good people in Trois-Rivières.

Mr. Boudria: I am sure that is so. They are almost as nice as the people of Glengarry—Prescott—Russell, might I add in my usual non-parochial way.

Perhaps we should be looking at the large number of employees within the association in question. This is something that we would be talking about some other time, I am sure. We contend that it is virtually impossible for 60 to 70 companies to choose one person to represent them all. If it is not impossible it is certainly very difficult. Having a representative appointed for you by the board is not necessarily the best situation either.

I would like to conclude by reiterating to the parliamentary secretary—I know that he is very concerned about this issue—that we are talking about his constituents, to a great extent. We want to ensure that the legislation receives passage as quickly as possible.

Again, I want to commend my colleague from Kenora for his good work in that area and for his indication of support to aid this piece of legislation go ahead as expeditiously as possible.

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Madam Speaker, we in the New Democratic Party indicated earlier that we would support this legislation.

It is important for those people who might be listening to understand that this is not back-to-work legislation. We are dealing with legislation which basically puts in place a mechanism to ensure that employers get together and, through their employer's association, actually negotiate with the employees affected.

Under the present provisions of the Canada Labour Code there is a procedure for the employers to get together and do just this. However, in this case this legislation deals with a situation in which one of the employer groups has gone through the court system and received an injunction which prevents the employer's

association from signing a collective agreement with its workers.

We believe that this particular legislation will be an improvement, and therefore we will support it. I would like to concur with the last two speakers that it has been very hard on the employees, their families and the communities involved to have such a long-standing disagreement. Six or seven years without a collective agreement is almost unheard of in this day and age.

I am glad that the government has moved on this matter, but I am concerned by the procedures that we used. This is not a new situation. The government had an opportunity to act earlier. The government had an opportunity to get the co-operation of the opposition parties.

We had been told in a House leaders' meeting about one or two weeks ago that something would be coming down on this issue. We tried to find out what the contents of the legislation were. We were not given this until Wednesday during Question Period and were asked to pass it in all stages Thursday. That gave us almost no time to peruse the wording to ensure that we were not getting caught in some sort of a trap or mistake regarding the wording.

Thursday morning we came into this House and found out that the Senate had not even been approached to pass the legislation before it adjourned. It was the New Democratic Party, myself and my House leader from Kamloops, who got up at eleven o'clock and asked: "Do we have assurance that the Senate will deal with this?"

• (1030)

We know that the Senate tends to adjourn Thursday and not gather again until sometime Tuesday. We found out that not only had there not been co-operation and information-sharing within this House, but actually the necessary mechanisms had not been put into place to ensure that the Senate would deal with this legislation.

Obviously as evidenced by the debate that has taken place here in this House, there is co-operation among the parties. Had proper notice been given I am sure this legislation would have been passed by this House and by the Senate yesterday and would be law today.