

*Industrial Relations*

Inverness-Richmond, now the Minister of Labour. This is interesting. It is a nice political in-and-out playing of the game, but it is not good enough for the people of Canada. It is part of a gigantic hoax which the Liberal party has been perpetrating on the people across the years, and if it is going to be true to its promise of 45 years ago, true to the promise of the Minister of Labour which he made on November 8 of last year, which was made in the speech from the throne, and true to all the promises which have been made, in view of the fact that this measure is not yet on the order paper the least the government can do, the least step it can take to show that it has some concern for its promises, would be to let this bill have second reading today and refer it to the industrial relations committee so that that committee can start studying the various elements of a national labour code. I think that this should happen to all of the bills I have on the order paper relating to this subject. I submit that if the government does not do that, it means that its promises about the things which really matter are not taken as seriously as some other promises which it seems anxious to push along, despite the difficulties which might be created.

I do not need to go into the details of this bill. Everyone knows what a national minimum wage would involve. It would involve setting a figure and declaring that no employees coming under federal labour jurisdiction should be paid a rate of wages less than the amount in this bill, namely \$1.25 an hour. This has been a figure advocated for a number of years by the Canadian Labour Congress. At the recent convention of the Canadian Labour Congress, which the Minister of Labour attended—he promised that a labour code would be brought in at this session. That was only a few weeks ago, however, and I do not expect action that fast from the slow moving Liberals—at that convention the congress had before it a proposal that the amount asked for be \$1.50 an hour. That proposal was one of those left over at the end of the convention and it was referred by the convention to executive council of the Canadian Labour Congress. I believe this proposal will be endorsed by the council and that \$1.50 will become official policy as far as the Canadian Labour Congress is concerned. I suggest that this is a more realistic figure for today, and if I do not get this bill through this year, the next time I bring it in the amount indicated will be \$1.50 an hour.

[Mr. Knowles.]

This bill cannot, of course, apply to all the workers in Canada. It can only apply to those who come under federal labour jurisdiction. Nine tenths of our workers come under provincial jurisdiction. In some provinces minimum wage legislation is in effect—not very advanced, as yet—but some of us feel that if we put appropriate legislation on the federal statute books it would give a lead to the provincial governments and we could move along in giving this kind of protection to our people.

All parties in the house are committed to advanced labour legislation and to this particular item of labour legislation, namely a minimum wage rate, and I hope that because we all believe in it and because there is no other such proposal on the order paper at this time either in the name of the government or anyone else, the house will be fair and let this bill have second reading today, upon which I would move that it be referred to the standing committee on industrial relations.

**Mr. J. A. Byrne (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Labour):** At the risk of violating the rule against repetition I should like to make my speech. The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) has referred to the promises made by the Liberal party over many years. I think he realizes, despite his misgivings, that practically all the good social welfare legislation which is on the statute books today both federal and provincial has been brought in by the Liberal administrations.

As he himself has said, nine tenths of those employed in Canada today come under the jurisdiction of the provincial authorities. We attach a great deal of importance to this proposed legislation. I have made some extensive notes and I am sure the house will be prepared to forgive me if I take some time to explain the difficulties which arise when legislation of general application is introduced in Canada, that is, legislation encompassing the whole of our territory from Newfoundland to Victoria, or Vancouver island. As the hon. member said earlier, there is no question about it; the Minister of Labour will be introducing legislation which will embody this minimum wage provision and other labour standards legislation.

**Mr. Knowles:** What year?

**Mr. Byrne:** My information is that it is before the officials of the Department of Justice for drafting and should appear before