

Private Members' Business

In conclusion, I would suggest to the Minister of Labour that before he would get support from all members of the House he would have to give us a good explanation as to why he would want this amendment passed.

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to join in the debate on this bill. As members and the public I presume have already gathered, what the bill does is make amendments to the Canada Labour Code and to the Public Service Staff Relations Act.

There are many provisions to commend this bill with respect to the amendments to the Canada Labour Code. Regrettably the government has chosen to do what seems to be a growing pattern in legislation which is to take some very admirable provisions that have been worked on long and hard and discussed with all interested parties—the stakeholders in the government's jargon—and bring those forward. Then at the last minute without warning, without discussion with anybody, it throws in something which it knows is unacceptable and in essence hopes those affected by the legislation will swallow the poison with the sugar.

I do not think we are quite prepared to do that. It is regrettable because this bill, between the two acts it amends, affects one million workers in Canada. That is a sizeable proportion of our work force and deserves major attention from members of Parliament.

Up until the point where the government decided to add its bit of arsenic to the bill we had an approach that was a model of the collaborative co-operative approach that the Minister of Labour has been promoting, at least in the private sector. It was an example of the kind of approach that should mark management-labour relations in Canada.

There had been extensive consultation with organized labour, with employers, over the last two years and there had been full consensus around the kinds of amendments that were needed, particularly with respect to minimum conditions of work.

This hopefully is the kind of management-labour relations we are trying to foster in Canada so that we are able to be competitive, to have a functioning healthy management labour climate, so that Canada is going to be able to deliver on its commitments, whether they are government commitments or commitments to the private sector.

I want to particularly congratulate all those involved in the discussions that lead to those portions of the bill on achieving a model of how management labour relations hopefully will function in the future.

[*Translation*]

I want to congratulate the minister and the others for the proposed amendments which will give greater flexibility to the provisions concerning parental leave thus helping parents to strike a balance between work and—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Order, please. The minister of Labour, on a point of order.

Mr. Danis: Mr. Speaker, I believe my hon. colleague for Ottawa West—

[*English*]

—is the last member to make a speech on this bill. I wonder if I could ask the House for unanimous consent to allow the hon. member for Ottawa West, and I know we all want to listen to her speech, finish her speech. I am sure we would all appreciate it if she could complete it today and perhaps afterward we could proceed to a vote. I think particularly of the 6,400 women who could benefit from this bill this year if we had it as soon as possible. However, I leave it in the hands of the members of the House.

Mr. Flis: Mr. Speaker, how hypocritical. This is the same minister who just minutes ago stood up in this House and brought in time allocation—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I do believe that there is no unanimous consent.

It being five o'clock p.m., pursuant to Standing Order 30(6), the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[*English*]

Mr. Harb: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. There have been consultations among the parties and independent members and I believe you will find that there is agreement to adopt at this point in our proceedings my private member's Bill C-371, an act respecting a national child day, at all stages, including committee of the whole, without debate.