

West Coast Ports Operations Act

employer or group of employers subject to federal legislation, now know that if they can stall negotiations, if they can refuse to come to an agreement with their workers and there is public outcry as a result, the Government will step in and impose a six and five solution. What in God's name is going to make employers in this country come to a reasonable agreement in negotiations? The Government has now told them, through this legislation, that they do not have to negotiate as it will impose six and five. That means the whole collective bargaining process is being destroyed.

Last June, July and August we sat in this House and were told by the Government that six and five was only going to be enforced against employees in the Public Service, employees of Crown corporations, employees of CP and other rail lines. Now there is legislation before us imposing six and five on the longshoremen. Who is next?

I do not trust the Government. This Party will not give a blank cheque to the Government. Unlike the action of the Leader of the Official Opposition yesterday, this Party will not give the Government a blank cheque. That Party calls itself the Opposition Party but its members act like members of the Supreme Soviet.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Murphy: The actions of the Polish Government toward the Solidarity union are much better than the actions of the Conservative Party in its dogmatic subservience to the Liberal Government.

An Hon. Member: Tell that to the farmers.

Mr. Murphy: As I mentioned earlier, I represent a western rural riding. I am very concerned about the movement of grain in this country and what we do to make sure of increased grain shipments. That is why, as the Member for Churchill, I have often talked about increasing the export of grain through that Port, unlike the Hon. Member for Lisgar (Mr. Murta) who has called the Port of Churchill a luxury that we cannot afford, and unlike the Hon. Member for North Vancouver-Burnaby (Mr. Cook) who has said we should close the Port of Churchill. I understand, and western Members in this Party and in the Conservative Party understand, that the amount of grain shipped through all ports must be increased. I am concerned about the shipment of grain. I am concerned that what the Government has done and is doing today is not going to help that process.

What should happen is what Members of this Party asked for last week when it became obvious that the two parties in this dispute could not come to an agreement. At that time we should have sent a senior officer of the Department of Labour—or even the Minister if he felt competent—to meet with management and labour and to sit with them until they came to an agreement acceptable to both parties. That is the role of the Department of Labour; it is not the role of the Department of Labour to hide when there is conflict.

This whole issue raises some questions, Mr. Speaker. It raises the question of the competence of the Minister of Labour (Mr. Caccia). It also raises the question of whether the employers knew or expected the Government to impose the six and five regime, and for that reason did not want a settlement of the dispute and therefore locked out the workers. It also raises the question of how the Government can expect trust and co-operation from longshoremen and other union members, not only for the six and five regime but in increasing the productivity of all sectors of the economy.

In his three-part soap opera of a couple of weeks ago the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) said we should be ready when the economic upturn finally comes. But that readiness is going to depend on the co-operation of management, farm groups and labour. I would say that the action the Government has taken today not only in ordering people back to work but in sneaking in the six and five régime as part of the imposed package will only ensure that there is no trust in the Government by the various sectors of the economy.

Despite the trust the Conservatives have for the Liberals, other sectors of the country do not trust the Government. Until that trust exists, whether as a result of another election or whether the Government can improve its image now and show that it is concerned about the plight of ordinary Canadians, then legislation of this sort is only going to create more and more division in the country.

In its attempt to pit farmer against worker, worker against farmer, port handler against grain handler and so on, legislation of this kind is going to destroy any unity or any spirit of willingness to solve the problems we face. That is why we cannot support the legislation. In the past this Party, with great reluctance, has supported back-to-work legislation. We did so with reluctance but we cannot do it today.

In the past, much to the chagrin of some people, the Conservative Party has voted against putting grain handlers back to work. I wonder why that was? I suspect that in 1974 they thought the salary increase was too much and would hurt the employers. We did not hear any speeches from Conservative Members at that time about the plight of the farmers. These great defenders of the western plains did not shout that the workers must be ordered back to work. They voted against it because they were after the workers, not the employers. They forgot all about the plight of the ordinary farmer.

It is with some regret that we cannot support the legislation before us. I do not like supporting back-to-work legislation. In this case we certainly could not support it because it is going to destroy the Canadian economy and the willingness of Canadians to work together.

What we have said ever since Parliament convened in April, 1980 is that we need real trust, real co-operation, if we are to make the country work, if we are to have Canadians working together and if we are to avoid the divisive forces that the Liberals and Conservatives are creating.