

are at stake. I am referring in this regard to the situations that would arise if the workers in power plants, for instance, in any of the great cities of Canada were allowed to go on strike. The result of anything like that happening would be disastrous.

I do not intend to continue this discussion any longer, but I do wish to point out the importance of the bill, and consequently the importance of the debate in which we are presently engaged.

**Hon. John J. Connolly:** Honourable senators, before the honourable sponsor of this bill (Hon. Mr. Denis) closes the debate I should like to say a word or two. First, I want to thank Senator Denis very much indeed for taking on the responsibility of sponsoring this measure. He has done it most admirably.

Secondly, I want to thank all honourable senators who have participated in the debate. This is the kind of bill which I am always glad to see come to the Senate, and for the reasons given by the speakers this afternoon.

This is a nonpolitical and noncontentious bill, but it is of great importance, and one with which the Senate is particularly well qualified to examine the draftsmanship and consider its purposes. This bill is before this house, quite frankly, because of some misgiving on my part about its contents. The Legislation Committee of the cabinet does not always have an opportunity of ferreting out defects that a body constituted like the Senate and its committees has. I am particularly pleased that this kind of discussion has taken place.

I would welcome the reference of this bill to a committee for detailed discussion and for questioning of the officials, particularly of the Department of Justice, as Senator Thorvaldson suggested, in order to make sure we are doing the right thing. We must, of course, stay within our own jurisdiction. Generally speaking, I think the purpose behind the bill is a proper and desirable one.

Coming now to the question of strikes—and I know I may be out of order in speaking about them—I think what Senator Brooks has said is worthy of more than passing attention.

**Hon. Mr. Brooks:** May I point out to the honourable leader that it is on account of the strike that this bill is being introduced. I do not think he is out of order, nor that I was out of order in my remarks.

**Hon. Mr. Connolly (Ottawa West):** I do not think you were out of order, and perhaps I

was not right in saying that I may be out of order; however, we will not argue the point as to whether either of us has the right to speak.

Strikes in industries which can be deemed to be essential have crippling effects upon the economy of this country, and the question, first of all, of governments dealing with these issues presents major problems, and when Parliament itself has to deal with some of the more protracted strikes, the problems are that much greater.

I would hope that in some way or another the people in the trade union movement, as well as those on the employers' side, in the private sector of the economy, could develop some civilized and reasonable way of dealing with strikes which paralyse the economy.

**Hon. Mr. Brooks:** Hear, hear.

**Hon. Mr. Connolly (Ottawa West):** The Industrial Disputes and Investigation Act has been on our statute books for perhaps 35 or 40 years, and probably without amendment. Some countries in the world have made some progress in the way of settling disputes without using the strike weapon. The strike weapon was used here because these people had a union, and they simply pulled their employees off the job.

It is easy, as the Leader of the Opposition has already said, for newspapers to state that the Government should have taken action sooner. The Government was alerted early enough, and was worried and gave serious consideration to it day after day. I recall how many days of the summer holidays were lost as a result of this strike in 1965, not only for me but for many others in the Government. Such problems are not easy to handle, for one has to deal with people who have rights given to them under the Industrial Disputes and Investigation Act. One has to go through the processes, and it is not always easy to come up with the right answers.

The Government has been criticised for making strike settlements in certain cases at levels that are too high. It is never commended for making settlements which in certain cases fall below the level sometimes described as the "Pearson formula". The fact that such situations arise in this country points up the difficulties that confront any government, in an economy where there is virtually full employment and in which every wage increase puts that much more pressure on the inflationary process.

I do not minimize the criticism that has been made by certain newspapers, but I make