

Supply

of employers across Canada by saying that workers have to come and ask their permission to vote. I have been around a long time and I have yet to know of an employee who had to come to ask for permission to vote. They are entitled to four hours and they get it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The hon. member is presenting an argument. The hon. member for Churchill has the floor.

Mr. Murphy: Mr. Speaker, to answer the point of order, which was not one, I know from my own personal experience there are many workers who have had to go to their employer to ask for time off to vote.

Miss Bégin: Name them.

Mr. Murphy: Safeway. I also know that in my riding—

Miss Bégin: Name them.

Mr. Murphy: I have just named one.

Miss Bégin: Name the others.

Mr. Murphy: If the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Miss Bégin) is that concerned, the government would be doing something about it. I will not spend my time listing all of them. I have named one employer.

The point is that under the present legislation in Canada—

Mr. Huntington: That is very misleading.

Mr. Murphy: Under the present legislation in Canada and the Conservatives do not give a damn—

Mr. Prud'homme: Oh, come on!

Mr. Epp: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker, and possibly a question of privilege. I thought that the debate today was relatively non-partisan on the basis that this was an approach to solve what has developed as an electoral problem. For any member to get up and say that a party does not care about electoral reform is going too far in terms of debate.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. member is not making a point of order. The hon. member for Churchill has the floor.

Mr. Murphy: The point I am making is that there are employers in my riding, as I am sure there are in ridings of other members, who have denied their workers the right to have four hours off to vote. Since the Conservatives and the Minister of National Health and Welfare are heckling me, I must say that they do not care about the people whom I represent who have a valid concern, which I am sure other constituents have also. If I am being heckled on that point I must assume that Members of Parliament do not care.

The point I am making is that this legislation contains two main provisions. It says that in the province of British Columbia and the Yukon territories you must vote by 5.30 at night. It also states that the employer has the right to designate on which day you can vote. Under the present legislation, you are entitled to have four hours off in order to vote on

election day. All employers in Canada are required to give their employees this time off on election day. However, the sneaky provision in this legislation, which both the Tories and the Liberals know of, is that only the employer is allowed to determine on what day the employee can vote.

Mr. Huntington: That is nonsense.

Mr. Murphy: That is exactly what the legislation provides for.

Mr. Huntington: You do not even know the act.

Mr. Murphy: I am surprised that the Conservative party thinks I do not know the act. I do not think that they know the act.

I will tell you what the legislation really means. I have been an employee. I have been told that I can have four hours off when the employer decides. I know that this situation is true, I am not making it up. I am talking from my own experience because I have been told that I can vote when my employer decides. One section of this legislation allows the employer to decide that his employee may vote any one of the advanced polling days. I can give an example of what this means. There is a particular plant in British Columbia where the polls close at 5.30. This plant where employees are represented by the IWA, will determine, for example, that a particular group of employees who traditionally vote NDP can vote on Wednesday, another group may vote on Thursday and that management can vote on election day. That is what this legislation provides for. That is what the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra (Mr. Clarke) and Senator Austin are saying. The employer will determine the day on which the employee can vote. If the Conservatives are not concerned about that, let them say so on their own time instead of complaining right now.

It is quite obvious that the only group who will suffer from a 5.30 closing and from the right given to employers to decide when to vote are the working people of Canada.

I have been talking mainly about unionized employees. It is a group which is well represented and defended. What will happen to the non-unionized employees? Can you imagine a non-union employee who lives in Vancouver, for example, or the interior of British Columbia, telling his employer that he has to vote by 5.30 but lives a 90-minute or even a two-hour drive from his polling station? I do not expect the Liberals to understand because they do not have any members in the west.

• (2150)

An hon. Member: Buy a faster car!

Mr. Murphy: Go to your seat and you can speak when it is your turn and prove what kind of a fool you are.

Some hon. Members: Order!

Mr. Smith: Come on, now.