

Parliamentary Employment and Staff Relations Act

labour jurisdiction are suddenly told that their wages will drop by 67 per cent. That is what happened.

Mr. Tobin: Impossible.

Mr. Baker: That is what happened.

Mr. Foster: A Tory Government!

Mr. Baker: Yes. That is what happened to all the refuellers of aircraft. The problem is who will protect these people.

First, there is the fact that they are working on federal property. Second, the provincial Governments will say that these workers cannot be classified and paid according to provincial laws because they work on federal property. They will say: "If you have a problem, go to the Canada Labour Code. Go to the federal Department of Labour. Go to the Minister who is so interested in Mirabel and Dorval".

Mr. Bouchard: And St. John's.

Mr. Baker: The Minister says: "and St. John's". They have gone to this particular Minister, which raises an interesting question as it relates to this Bill. How can we classify and protect workers and the wages they receive if they are not direct employees of the federal Government? That is to say how can we protect them if they are employed by an agency of the federal Government as opposed to being employed by the federal Government? Therein lies the problem. The Government will have to address it, and address it very quickly.

As I said earlier, there is the Charter of Rights and Freedoms which does not allow a distinction to be made on the basis of where one lives. The present situation today is that if one is a Newfoundlander and works for the federal Government on a federal boat and when one crosses the 102 longitude, one's wages increase by \$300 a month. That is the present policy of Treasury Board. As I also mentioned before, if one lives in Ottawa and is a carpenter, a messenger or a federal employee under General Trades and Labour, then one receives a different salary from someone working in Toronto doing exactly the same job. The fact of the matter is that for the first time the legislation which is before the House would give employees the right to say: "All right, we are represented by a bargaining unit". I think the federal Government has a duty to examine just where it is going and just what the impact of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms is or should be.

The Human Rights Commission and the Bill which passed the House recently on employment equity should also be considered in this context. I am afraid that is something that is not being done by the Government. However, members of the Official Opposition will hound the Government until these wrongs are corrected. We will hound the Government until the present legislation is brought up to par, in other words, until the employees of the House of Commons and the Senate receive what they so rightfully deserve.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Papproski): Are there questions or comments? The Hon. Member for Humber—Port au Port—St. Barbe (Mr. Tobin).

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, it is always a great pleasure to sit and listen to the Hon. Member for Gander—Twillingate (Mr. Baker). In addition to being one of the most articulate Members of this House and one of the most entertaining speakers in this House, he is also one of the most knowledgeable whenever he addresses the House on any particular Bill.

I think that Members of Parliament would sit in anger in their seats after being informed, as we just were by the Hon. Member for Gander—Twillingate, that there are people who are working indirectly under contract for the federal Government who have experienced a 67 per cent reduction in their salaries. As the Hon. Member indicated, that type of action is being allowed to take place under the nose of the Government and on federal property. As it relates to this Bill, it does not provide for employees to grieve in a substantial way under the normal collective bargaining process classification.

This is a 67 per cent reduction in an individual's salary—a 67 per cent chop, a chunk, a piece taken out of his ability to provide for himself and his family. It represents 67 per cent of his shelter and his food, 67 per cent of his ability to clothe and school his children and 67 per cent of his recreation moneys. In relation to this type of brutal and Draconian measure occurring under the nose of the federal Government on federal property and the type of problem we now see in Alberta with the Gainers strike, does the Hon. Member believe that the private sector is looking to the federal Government in the final analysis for leadership when it sees this type of activity occurring with the silent consent of the federal Government on federal property? In the final analysis, does the private sector seek to emulate that type of practice which causes ugly and trying situations such as the one we see as a result of the Gainers strike in Alberta?

Mr. Baker: Mr. Speaker, without referring to any particular strike that is happening, let me answer the Hon. Member's question in a general way as it relates to the responsibilities of the federal Government. With regard to the 67 per cent wage decrease, I was referring to a whole group of people who work on federal property in this country. This is a situation which started at Dorval and Mirabel, as the Minister knows. However, the decision to pay 67 per cent less—to reduce salaries from \$15 per hour to \$8 per hour—was made because of a contract with Air Canada. Not only was it with Air Canada, it was with all our major airlines—those great corporate citizens of Canada. These are the people who put out flyers which state that they are great Canadian citizens. They carry the Canadian flag.

All the airlines which operate in Canada used the device of employing an agency in order to get a job done on federal property at those kind of prices. However, they made one mistake. The companies they asked to tender on the contracts were all companies in the United States. I tell that to the