

Government Orders

Organized labour through the Canadian Labour Congress also feels that ministerial direction for a last-offer vote would constitute unwarranted interference with labour-management relations and the international affairs of the union. My colleague will argue further that there could be the spectre of conflict of interest.

At least at this point in the debate on second reading I think that the bill is generally acceptable to my party and that it should be allowed to proceed into committee for further study and clarification and hopefully for the inclusion of the friendly amendments which I, my colleagues and my party are suggesting to the minister today.

Ms. Joy Langan (Mission—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, I would like to rise first to say that I am pleased this bill is before the House, but I would like to make a correction.

My hon. colleague, the labour critic for the Liberals referred to the CLC as being concerned about the impact of the clause 1 amendment on the international workings of the affiliated union. I think he meant to say the internal workings of the affiliated union.

These amendments to the Canada Labour Code are ones that certainly this caucus can support and, as my hon. colleague the labour critic for the Liberals said, that the Canadian Labour Congress can support.

What we most support is the proposition of consultation and working together to come up with amendments to the Canada Labour Code that are good for the workers, good for the employers and certainly good for the Minister of Labour. When two groups have come together and come to a consensus conclusion, the likelihood of both sides being willing to work within the system, and the system working, are much enhanced.

Unfortunately the amendments to part I of the code and to the Public Service Staff Relations Act were not the result of consultation. After seeking and getting support for all the other amendments, the minister without warning dropped the part I amendment, the same amendment, into the Public Service Staff Relations Act.

The previous speaker has alluded to what is in it. I would have liked to have been able to refer to the

explanatory notes normally attached to a bill because they probably would have been in lay language and much easier for Canadians to understand than the legalise of a bill. Unfortunately all it says is "New", which suggests to me that it was a last minute addition to the bill and there was not time to work through it.

Essentially it says under "Vote on Employer's Offer":

108.1(1) Where notice to bargain collectively has been given under this Part, and the Minister is of the opinion that it is in the public interest that the employees in the affected bargaining unit be given the opportunity to accept or reject the offer of the employer last received by the trade union in respect of all matters remaining in dispute between the parties, the Minister may

It goes on to set out the conditions. It has been noted that several governments already have this clause in their legislation. The previous speaker referred to Alberta which I found quite fascinating because Alberta probably has the most retrogressive, old-fashioned labour legislation in the country. I found that rather fascinating. I am quite pleased for the workers in Alberta that there is one little sign of light at the end of the tunnel.

He then referred to British Columbia. I think he was referring to the same labour code that the Liberal opposition in British Columbia held up in the House for seven months because it was felt that it was not a fair labour code. Ninety-four per cent of the clauses in the labour code were reached by consensus with labour and management but the Liberals did not like that labour code because it was far too progressive.

It is interesting the hon. member would refer to those items. The Ontario labour code, also introduced by an NDP government, has proven to be and has been called by labour relations experts everywhere one of the most progressive pieces of labour legislation in the world. Both British Columbia and Ontario codes, I might add, have anti-scab legislation along with the legislation in Quebec.

I am confident, Mr. Speaker, that you and the people out there will understand that while both British Columbia and Ontario have this clause in their labour codes, the difference is that the labour movement and the employers were consulted about the wording, about how it would work.