

Interim Supply

say that these people have to wait for what is done by way of general legislation for all older people. The Government has a responsibility to all people of the country, as citizens, but it also has its particular responsibility to be a good employer. I do not think the Government is being a good employer when it keeps turning a deaf ear to the plight and the needs of our retired civil servants. I regret that nothing was done last session and that in this session that has lasted 53 sitting days so far we have got no action on this important question.

I couple with the plight of retired civil servants the plight of some retired Royal Canadian Mounted Police officers. I am not referring to the two about whom the hon. Member for York-Humber spoke a moment ago, but rather to those who were retired on pensions provided under legislation, not pensions provided by Order in Council. It is also a fact that there are persons on defence service pensions who retired some years ago to whom some consideration should be given. With increasing costs and increasing standards, these people have a right to increases in their pensions which will enable them to meet these increasing costs and to enjoy our rising standards.

● (6:50 p.m.)

The same situation applies to the pensioners of the Canadian National Railways. It seems very difficult to get anything out of the present Minister of Transport, other than a promise to send a communication to the President of Canadian National Railways. All we ever get back from him is the same kind of communication, which suggests this is something for the Government to act upon only when it deals with all old people generally. As I say, I think this Government and the Canadian National Railways have a responsibility not only to citizens generally, they also have a special responsibility as employers. I regret very much that 53 days of this session of the twenty sixth Parliament have gone by without any action for these people.

Another item of unfinished business concerns something I have raised with the Minister of Labour on several occasions recently, namely the Fair Wages and Hours of Labour Act. Tomorrow is July 1, a significant day in the history of Canada. It will be the 98th anniversary of Confederation and also the day on which the Canada Labour Code comes into effect. This is a good piece of legislation. We waited a long while for it, but it is a good thing we have it. It is going to apply

[Mr. Knowles.]

certain standards to a good many employees. But the Code will not affect people who are working directly for the federal Government, nor will it affect people who are working on federal Government contracts. They can get the same standards that are set up in the Canada Labour Code only by other action. The Government has apparently acted by a Treasury Board minute to provide to direct Government employees one standard in the Canada Labour Code, namely the wage of \$1.25 per hour.

However, the other three standards, the maximum work week, the eight general holidays with pay and the two weeks holiday with pay do not apply by law to direct employees of the Government, unless they have that protection under something like the Civil Service Act. So far as people working on Government contracts are concerned, they do not have this coverage at all. The Minister of Labour has promised repeatedly that this matter would be looked after. Last year when he introduced the Canada Labour Code he took the initiative himself in admitting the Canada Labour Code would not cover these two groups of employees. He said they would be covered by amendments to the Fair Wages and Hours of Labour Act. He said that the Fair Wages and Hours of Labour Act would be amended so its provisions would parallel those of the Canada Labour Code, and would come into effect at the same time the Canada Labour Code came into effect.

We had discussion about this the other night in which the Minister quibbled about certain words he had used. He tried to say that his promise to have this come into effect by July 1, 1965, applied only to the minimum wage for direct Government employees. My reading of his answers to my questions over the months makes it very clear that it was his intention that these things would be in effect on the same date, namely July 1. I regret very much, Mr. Chairman, that tomorrow, when the Canada Labour Code is going into effect, it will not be paralleled by amendments to the Fair Wages and Hours of Labour Act, so that Government employees and persons working on Government contracts might have the same four minimum standards that are set out in the Canada Labour Code. I repeat those four minimum standards: a minimum wage; eight statutory holidays with pay; two weeks holiday with pay each year and a maximum work week of five days or 40 hours. As I say, Mr. Chairman, these things ought to be in effect and