

Canada Labour (Standards) Code

appendix to *Hansard* the regulations in question, so that the house will understand exactly what the situation is and the degree of application involved? The amendments seem to apply to various eventualities. We would like to know what matters have been in contemplation by the minister and in what way they have been incorporated in the new regulations.

Mr. Nicholson: Considerable work has been done on the draft regulations. The regulations, as the right hon. gentleman knows, could not be passed by cabinet or recommended to His Excellency until the house had approved the bill. There is one aspect of the proposed regulations on which the workers on the east coast sought clarification. We have not disclosed the regulations but have discussed the principles. We had discussions with them on Friday last and further discussions are taking place today. I will give the right hon. gentleman the assurance that as soon as this point has been cleared up the regulations will be made available to the house promptly.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Before this debate is over?

Mr. Nicholson: I would hesitate to bring a draft order in council before cabinet without the house having given its authority. I hope the right hon. gentleman will trust us when we say that, having had discussions with the employers and the workers on both coasts, the regulations will be reasonable.

Mr. Robert McCleave (Halifax): Mr. Speaker, as the minister has noted, this is what might be called a small amendment to the Canada Labour (Standards) Code, but it is none the less a substantial amendment as far as a good number of my constituents and a good number of other Canadians who are engaged in stevedoring are concerned. The problems that are to be solved by Bill S-54 are not unique or new. They are clearly problems that existed when the Canada Labour (Standards) Code was originally presented to another parliament. I suggest that it should have been anticipated then that this difficulty would arise and the problem should have been solved at that time. As it is, a body of men who have what is called multi-employer employment, that is, they move from one company to another in the services they perform, has been denied some substantial benefits that other people have enjoyed under the Canada Labour (Standards) Code. As a result, the minister and the department must be thoroughly faulted.

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Having said that, and having received notification from the men involved as to their feelings toward this bill, it can be said that the measure is welcomed. I think I can also say on behalf of the official opposition that we will grant the minister his request, unless there should arise subsequently a need of amendment. We will be prepared to give this measure as swift a passage as possible, so these people may plan over the holiday season whether they wish to work on that occasion.

I should also like to say that it is very, very rare that a minister comes before us and says that regulations have been drawn up under a bill that he is piloting through parliament. Usually, we have to wait around for ever and a day for the regulations. I suppose I would be out of order if I chastised the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Robichaud) at this time, but I know of legislation passed six or more months ago for which we are still awaiting regulations. Therefore the minister and his department are to be complimented on doing their homework, if the regulations are what we hope they will be.

The final point I should like to make is that there will be disappointment that some method has not been found to achieve retroactivity, especially for those men who have had to wait more than a year after the Canada Labour (Standards) Code brought benefits to other work people. With those caveats and reservations, Mr. Speaker, and whatever might come out in examination at the committee stage, we give a qualified blessing to Bill S-54.

Mr. Frank Howard (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, at the outset I think we should deal with the request of the minister for unanimous consent to have the bill proceed through its various stages in the hope that it will be passed by the house today. There is no hesitation at all on our part in providing that unanimous consent. It might be well in passing to point out that often when reporting events in parliament, those who do the reporting and interpreting to the general public fail to take full account of the harmonious relationship that exists between us as parties when there is something of this importance to deal with and when there is a request for unanimity.

● (3:40 p.m.)

I am sure that other people in the house have expressed the same view. The Canada Labour (Standards) Code came into force on July 1, 1965, almost 18 months ago. I am sure it would be a surprise to some hon. members to learn that there are employees working in