

Private Members' Business

colleague from Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia has said, there must be a better way.

In the event that Bill C-250 that we have before us today is not the best way, then I think the best way to look at it would be to refer it to an all-party committee of members of this House and come up with the best way. Many of the comments brought forward in the prepared speech by the member for Thunder Bay—Nipigon could very well come before that committee and be considered. We are not saying that those are not valid points. They have to be considered along with the others, but the interests of the producers have been ignored every time there has been a dispute to this point, and they have got to be taken into account as well. How could any MP in this House who purports to have the interests of farmers in mind oppose such a move?

Therefore I would like to move the following amendment to Bill C-250. I move:

That the motion be amended—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I am afraid the hon. member seconded the motion. Therefore he cannot move the amendment. Is the hon. member finished with his debate?

Mr. White: We will come to that later then, Mr. Speaker. I am sorry. I thank you for your advice. I was unaware of that, but I would hope one of the members who speaks after me would move the amendment that was first alluded to by my colleague from Saskatchewan and that I would support as well, that the subject matter of the bill be referred to a committee for further study and to come up with a better way.

Mr. Robert D. Nault (Kenora—Rainy River): Mr. Speaker, I would like to enter this debate on the private member's bill, Bill C-250, an act to amend the Canada Labour Code.

What I would like to talk about is the kind of charade that is being played here today. I beg your indulgence, Mr. Speaker, for a moment. As a fairly new member, I was led to believe that when it comes to private members' bills, if you had an idea that you thought made a lot of sense, you put it into a private member's bill and put it in front of the House for debate. You did not just throw out a piece of legislation and tell the people who are

going to debate the matter, for or against, "Just ignore that bill, it is not any good anyway. It is just to start the talking".

Mr. Speaker, we do a lot of talking in this House. However, we are being asked to deal with a particular piece of legislation, in this case, a private member's bill which asks for some very specific changes to the Canada Labour Code.

First of all, the changes the hon. member for Swift Current—Maple Creek—Assiniboia talks about relate to a right that workers in this country have fought for for over 100 years. They have put a lot of time and effort into learning their trade and they put pressure on governments and on companies to give them the ability to pull their services, if they are not allowed to make a decent living in this country.

Some of us propose that unionism is not a political party. To some of us unionism is the art of collective bargaining, the ability to get a good standard of living in this country. That is exactly what unionism is all about, what collective bargaining is all about and what, in essence, pulling your services is all about, if you cannot make a good deal.

I want to talk about some of the issues and statements made by members of the Conservative Party relating to the fact that farmers always get an unfair deal. If we take a good look at the railway strikes which took place in this country as well as the grain-handlers' strikes, very serious consideration was given to what would take place if we let those individual unions stay out for too long and, therefore, there was back-to-work legislation. That is a prerogative of this House. When strikes go on too long and this House feels that it is hurting the economy as a whole, then we have the ability to legislate a particular group of individuals back to work. If you look back in history, in the case of the railway union for example, they have been legislated back to work after a period of one week, in most cases, and I do not think that that was unfair.

I want to talk a little about the fact that the hon. member feels that because it is an essential service these individuals should have their rights as Canadian citizens and workers taken away.