

Industrial Relations

heard that one before". I asked him how old he was; I think he knew what was coming. He said: "I am only 35". Of course, the hon. member for Kootenay East (Mr. Byrne) knows what my reply was. I said: "Yes, this matter has been the subject of discussion in the political life of Canada for at least 10 years longer than you have been alive." And that is the situation, Mr. Speaker.

I realize my hon. friends opposite get tired of hearing about 1919, but it is still one of the facts of Canada's history that in that year the Liberals made certain promises to the people of Canada, and one of those promises was for a national labour code. Here we are 45 years later and we still have not got it. I wonder where this myth got started that the Liberals are a progressive outfit; that the Liberals are the people who will do things for Canada. When one looks at their record, one realizes that they are just about the slowest moving aggregation known to political science.

Miss LaMarsh: Give us another ten members.

Mr. Knowles: What an interjection to come from the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Miss LaMarsh). She did not have the experience of sitting in this house when the Liberals had an overwhelming majority. But I have had that experience, and they did not move any faster when they had an overwhelming majority than they do now when they are in a minority position. As a matter of fact, in this minority position they feel the prodding even more sharply than when in a majority position. I suggest that it is a subject for study by the political scientists in this country as to how the myth ever got started and how it has ever been maintained that the Liberals are a progressive people, moving in the direction of progressive social legislation. I said they were the slowest moving aggregation known to political science. In fact they do not move at all. After 45 years we are still waiting for most of what they promised in 1919.

I know what the answer will be today to my proposal for a national labour code. I can see it on the face of the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of Labour. He is going to say: "Does the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre not know that this was mentioned in the speech from the throne; that the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) promised it in his speech on the address; and that the Minister of Labour (Mr. MacEachen)

confirmed the promise?" Three or four times since, during the session, we have been told that a national labour code is going to be brought in by this beneficent Liberal government. Well, we have had these promises through the years. The Minister of National Health and Welfare made a delightful interjection a moment ago. I think of what happened after the election in connection with the Canada pension plan and of the promises we were assured would materialize on the statute books last session. Those promises were repeated this session, but so far we are still waiting. However, today we are discussing one of the elements of a national labour code, and I submit it is not good enough for the Liberals to keep on fooling the people of Canada that somehow, if the people will stick with them, they will get some of this legislation.

I was tempted at the start of this session, even though I filed all my bills which are part of a national labour code, to let them stand in view of the clear cut promise the government had made. But here we are on the 83rd day of the session and there is no suggestion of a national labour code on the order paper in any way, shape or form. There have been conferences, and no doubt the parliamentary secretary will tell me about the conferences which have been held between the Department of Labour and representatives of provincial departments of labour. He will tell me that there are all sorts of involvements and complications which have to be worked out, that these have to be studied, and that one of these days these problems will all be resolved and we will get the legislation. We will also be told that the government does not like to see this done in a piecemeal sort of way and that it is a mistake on my part to bring in a bill regarding vacations with pay on one occasion, a bill regarding statutory holidays with pay on another occasion, and a bill regarding minimum wages on still another. I am sorry I am taking away the hon. member's speech; I can see it vanishing from his face as well as from his notes. But, Mr. Speaker, we have listened to this time after time when the Liberals were on that side of the house.

It was, of course, different when they were sitting on this side of the house. When I moved this very bill now before the house in the last parliament, who was the member to stand up and speak strongly for it and say it was good legislation and should be supported? It was the then hon. member for