

Labour Conditions

legislation, Bill No. C-215. In doing so I do not plan, of course, to attack the minister, for whom I have always had the greatest respect, and still have. However, I do think that he has been misguided in this situation.

We all know that since this government came into power the minister has been brought forward on a number of occasions by the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) to bail out other ministers who have dug a hole in which to bury themselves. We have not heard from them since, so he did a very good job. However, I am afraid that the minister must have dug a hole for himself on this occasion; and this is regrettable because I do not think that he would have done this on his own. I think there must have been some assistance from an unknown source, and in reviewing the situation it could be that there is the fine Pickersgillian hand behind the scenes, to the extent that as acting prime minister on that occasion possibly he has led the minister down the garden path. I do not know whether or not this is correct, but I suggest it could be so. Goodness knows, we are bad enough off now with the present Prime Minister; but I hope that the day will never come when we will have the hon. member for Bonavista-Twilligate (Mr. Pickersgill) as prime minister.

The minister said in his remarks today that Mr. Claude Jodoin was opposed to binding legislation; that the union did not agree to a commissioner or to binding legislation. He also mentioned, through questioning I think, that an agreement was drafted by the deputy minister of labour. So here we have a situation where the government practically draws up an agreement, at least from what I have been told. Then someone has said to the Shipping Federation: Look, you agree to that and we will see that there is legislation brought in, and everything will be hunkey-dory for the shipping federation.

What are we faced with in this legislation, Mr. Speaker? The hon. members for Ontario (Mr. Starr) and York South (Mr. Lewis) put the situation exceptionally well and placed the case before the house, so I do not intend to recall dates, telegrams or letters, to show who said what and who did not say what. Both hon. members are to be commended for the fine job that they did of pointing out the flaws in this iniquitous and vicious—as I think it is—legislation. I cannot see the justification for compulsory arbitration. I am not for it, I will never be for it and I will vote against it.

[Mr. Muir (Cape Breton North and Victoria).]

As was said by the two hon. members to whom I have referred, this legislation is compulsory arbitration in its most extreme and its worst form. As other hon. members have said, it will put into effect recommendations which are not yet even made. We do not know what this commissioner will say.

Supposing, Mr. Speaker, we approved this bill, and the commissioner says in his report that from now on only Liberals will be employed on the docks. That could happen. It is just as reasonable to suggest that as to suggest anything else. We do not know what this man will recommend. The bill is asking parliament to legislate approval of the commissioner's report. It places the commissioner in an impossible position because any recommendation that he makes will become law at once.

With regard to the position of the government, I suggest that they made a deal with the company to guarantee legislative action to cut the work gangs. The minister admitted in his speech that that was one of the conditions. But the deal was not—

Mr. Nicholson: Would the hon. gentleman permit a question. Can he refer to any part of my speech where I said any such thing? Would it not be fairer to say that a reduction in gang strength might take place?

Mr. Muir (Cape Breton North and Victoria): I thank the minister for that correction. One would assume that that is going to happen. The minister said "might take place", but I leave it to hon. members and the people interested to draw their own conclusions.

I suggest that the deal was not fully explained to the union members. We have as an appendix to *Hansard* copies of all of the wires, statements and so on to which I have already referred, to the effect that the union was definitely not in favour of compulsory arbitration. Labour is against compulsory arbitration, as certainly it should be. If we in this house have any thoughts at all for the workingman, we should be against compulsory arbitration.

This legislation is compulsory arbitration. The company dictated the terms to the government, and the government is asking parliament, as another member said today, to rubberstamp these terms. This is bad law. It is dirty, mean, cheap law; but not cheap for the workers concerned: I think it will be expensive for them.