

Anti-Inflation Act

might indicate that the Canada Labour Relations Council was composed of those who in their daily lives were practitioners in collective bargaining. They were not academic particularly, and not corporate presidents. Some of them were men who, in the corporations, were responsible for the proper functioning of the collective bargaining process in their enterprise. On the labour side there were representatives of unions, including union leaders who, in their daily lives, were concerned with the operation of the collective bargaining process. They identified the need for a collective bargaining data information centre.

It was perceived that existing data was not prepared specifically for collective bargaining, or it was perceived in some cases as having a pro-labour or pro-management bias. As a result the council set up a subcommittee to study the issue, including the possibility of establishing a national data centre.

At the direction of the subcommittee my department conducted a survey of employers and labour organizations. The survey asked questions about the sources of bargaining information then being used, the kind of information needed, how often it was required, and how the existing information could be improved. The subcommittee discovered a wealth of compensation and economic information produced by a variety of government and private sources. The survey also showed that many practitioners in collective bargaining, particularly among trade unions, did not always know what information was available and sometimes had no access to it. What was needed was a single agency to put all the data together and make it available and useful to union and company negotiators. The key elements of this data would be accuracy, adequacy, timeliness and, hence, credibility.

The centre which my department is now in process of establishing would not duplicate existing data collection functions, but rather will act as a clearing house from which existing information can be obtained.

An hon. Member: Big Brother.

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): Just one minute. Perhaps when the hon. member who just referred to Big Brother sees who will be involved in the centre, it will allay his fears. I propose to set up the centre as a separate departmental agency under a tripartite management board of labour, management and governmental representatives appointed by order in council. Therefore the centre will not come under a government bureaucracy but under the aegis of a tripartite body.

Mr. Paproski: I wish you were looking after multiculturalism.

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): We may even have Canadians of Ukrainian descent represented on it.

The centre would respond to requests for information from the parties to collective bargaining, mediators and conciliators, and Labour Canada and provincial officials. Where necessary it would work with clients to identify information needs and collate data and publish regular reports. The setting of priorities and the program direction would remain the responsibility

[Mr. Munro (Hamilton East).]

of the centre's own management board. Eventually, I would suspect and expect that the centre will play an active role in promoting data improvement by identifying gaps in existing information and ways in which information can be made relevant for collective bargaining.

With the participation of both labour and management, under whose aegis this centre will be, I anticipate that the development work for establishing the centre can be completed this year and the centre made operational by early 1978.

I suspect that the credibility difficulties which beset other agencies trying to supply information will be overcome when we establish this centre, the findings of which will be under the aegis of labour, management, and government, working together under a tripartite relationship.

Mr. Paproski: You mean a troika.

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): The centre can be an invaluable agency for developing an open and creative dialogue among the parties at the national and provincial levels, as well as at the level of the enterprise. It can help to remove some of the negative adversary elements from the collective bargaining process by introducing elements of logic and reason. Its potential as an inflation fighter is, I believe, self-evident.

I have identified the six main initiatives; they relate mainly to the curtailment of inflation during the post-control period and the question with which the hon. member for Eglinton dealt, the absolute necessity of involving labour and management in some type of consultative mechanism. This involvement will come about not only in the multipartite agency, mentioned as one of the six initiatives, but also in the operational aspects of some of the other initiatives I identified. Their involvement in supervising many of these initiatives will be continuing and, hopefully, permanent.

In closing I should briefly like to mention something else. I shall not elaborate on the information, since the hon. member for Eglinton dealt with it adequately. The point concerns collective agreement settlement statistics compiled by my department. These statistics show that for the 12-month period ending March, 1977, the real, base rate rise in earnings was 5.8 per cent, not a bad increase, especially when compared with the figure of 3.9 per cent for the previous 12-month period. That shows that under the controls program we have laid the basis for a re-evaluation or re-assessment of our collective bargaining system.

Mr. Alexander: You should hear what Joe Morris says about it.

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): Because we laid the basis for re-evaluation and, as a result of the beneficial views expressed by management, labour, and members of this House, we have been able to design these initiatives which we are confident will serve a useful purpose in the post-control period.

Mr. Alexander: Mr. Speaker, will the minister permit a question? I do not intend to ask a "dirty" question. The minister referred to the involvement of a multipartite council