

Department of Labour Act

effect, the bill was introduced by the former Liberal Government and died with the dissolution of that Parliament.

It was then introduced by the Conservative government. When that government ceased to exist, since the bill had not made its way through the House we introduced it once again and it is before the House today for third reading.

Perhaps it is necessary for me to provide a brief history, since some hon. members are perhaps not familiar with the earlier deliberations on this bill or the history of the *Labour Gazette*. The statutory requirement that the *Labour Gazette* be published monthly by the Department of Labour goes back to 1900 when the Department of Labour really came into existence with a piece of legislation which also provided the statutory requirement that this publication occur monthly.

Prior to 1900 almost all of the labour law in the country was provincial. It was limited and it certainly lacked greatly in uniformity. One could say that from the time that the first federal legislation in the labour field was passed in 1900 the federal legislation was adopted by a variety of governments and used as a showpiece, if you like, as a way for the provinces to follow. This resulted in a general pattern of uniformity of legislation evolving in the succeeding years.

It is interesting to note that the first editor of the *Labour Gazette* was a young man by the name of William Lyon Mackenzie King. He had prepared a report on the state of working conditions and other matters which related to labour in the country. His report was prepared in 1898 for the then postmaster general, Mr. Mulock. Subsequently, when the postmaster general brought forth the legislation in 1900 he enticed Mackenzie King to become the first editor of the *Labour Gazette* and, in effect, also the first deputy minister of the department, which I believe took place in September of that same year. Thus, this publication which could and would go out of existence with the passage of this legislation actually dates back that far and has had a distinguished first editor.

The *Labour Gazette* played a key role for many years in relation to the publication of statistics and other facts which relate to industrial relations in the country. I think it made a very substantial contribution to a better understanding among all parties of the actual facts and developments in the labour scene. But times change and, perhaps, the *Labour Gazette* can best be described as having become a victim of the changing times. Its original need existed as a consequence of an absolute vacuum in relation to publications on subjects of that kind.

With the passing years there were more and more publications relating to labour matters, some of them put out by provincial governments and some by private agencies, and, indeed, others put out by the federal government. I think it is interesting to note that the requirement that the *Labour Gazette* be published monthly also came to be a bit of rigidity in relation to better serving the interests, because from the point of view of the type of statistics which are useful to management, labour and other people involved in industrial relations, quarterly publications are often more useful than monthly ones.

This rigidity perhaps led to a variety of other publications taking over part of the original role of the *Labour Gazette*. Toward the end the publication had changed very considerably in its character and had really become a forum for the expression of opinions and trends in relation to the whole subject of industrial relations. That was a useful purpose, but I think the essence of the consideration by the two previous governments, as well as this one, in introducing the legislation to remove the statutory requirement that such a magazine bear such a name, and that it be published monthly, was the cost in relation to recovery. The fee which could be realized by sale was in the vicinity of \$7.50 per issue, while the cost of publication amounted to about \$60 per issue. One can see that there was a loss of over \$50 per copy. A former minister indicated that between 1978 and 1980 the loss would have amounted to something in the vicinity of \$400,000 had the publication been continued monthly.

There are two salient points in relation to why the legislation comes forward. First, the place has been taken by a great number of other types of publication, and I will mention some of them briefly later on. Second, the costs in relation to the number of readers and the value of that particular publication has become prohibitive. I might add that today a great deal of the communication of much of the information which formerly appeared in the *Labour Gazette* is dealt with on a very frequent basis by electronic communication, as well as by the greater use of other forms of communication. This does not mean that the Department of Labour is in any way receding from its responsibility to circulate statistics and other materials with reference to industrial relations.

I would now like to mention the names of a few of the other publications which the Department of Labour puts out. They are: *Base Rate Increases*, published quarterly and annually; *Calendar of Expiring Collective Agreements*, which is published annually; *Report on Strikes and Lock-Outs in Canada*, which is published annually; *Wage Rates, Salaries and Hours of Work*, published annually; *Arbitration Services Reporter*, which is published monthly; *Labour Standards in Canada*, which is published annually; *Legislative Review*, which is published annually; *Collective Bargaining Review*, which is published monthly; *Wage Developments*, published annually; *Wage Developments Resulting from Major Collective Bargaining Settlements*, published quarterly; *Work Stoppages*, published monthly; and *Working Conditions in the Canadian Industry*, published annually. In addition to these publications we have a high level publication entitled *The Quality of Working Life*, which is becoming more and more important and which is available quarterly upon request.

In addition to all of these publications, Labour Canada is planning a new initiative to replace the Labour Information Bureau which was proposed in Bill C-9. Bill C-9 encountered stiff resistance from the labour movement, especially public sector unions concerned with the proposed bureau's mandate and composition. The new approach, which we believe genuinely acceptable and responsive both to the labour movement and to employer organizations, calls for the establishment of