

Sector Bargaining

country are creating all the problems, or a substantial number of them. There is the suggestion that if we could get all the unions in a particular sector in line, that would somehow solve the problems.

Mr. Jelinek: The unions support this.

Mr. Murphy: I represent the constituency of Churchill, and I know that it is not just the unions which are not in line. When we talk about grain transportation, we are talking about a number of different government and non-government agencies which are involved, and this complicates the movement of grain in this country. The CNR makes certain decisions, the CPR makes certain decisions, and the Canadian Wheat Board also makes certain decisions. Anyone involved in the grain trade recognizes there is not always agreement as to what should or could be done. Port authorities and the government are involved in the movement, sale and transportation of grain in Canada. People who focus on only one item, quite often fail to recognize that this is not strictly a union problem; it is a problem relating to the whole structure of Canadian industries.

It is not easy to identify which unions belong in a particular sector. Some will say that the railway lines obviously belong in the grain transportation sector. Others will say railway unions have something to do with CN Express. Others might say that they belong in the sector occupied by VIA Rail because VIA Rail moves people from area to area. Others might say they belong in the sector transporting dairy products because that sector also uses rail lines. Those unions also belong in the sector transporting live or packaged beef to various parts of the country.

In what sector do railway unions belong? Human beings as well as goods are serviced by rail lines. It may be fine to say that they are all part of the grain-handling system and therefore belong in that particular sector, but that is very simplistic. I do not think this matter can be easily resolved.

Another problem may be the attitude of government. This bill suggests that the Public Service Staff Relations Act as well as the Canada Labour Code are involved, and this is correct. However, I cannot imagine this government, or any preceding government, giving the same rights to workers under the public service regime as those given to people under the Canada Labour Code because for a number of years unions whose workers came under the Public Service Staff Relations Act, have asked governments for the rights enjoyed by people working under the Canada Labour Code, and the government has always turned them down.

When this type of legislation is proposed, under what umbrella do people come? Do they come under the umbrella of the Canada Labour Code or the umbrella of the PSSRA? That has not been answered here.

Let us look at the situation on Parliament Hill. This government and previous governments have not given bargaining rights to people who work on Parliament Hill. How can we say all these different sectors should be under one umbrella when we cannot even determine the bargaining rights of people on this Hill? Certain events in the past few months would indicate

that that is a necessary step for the government to take. A number of people, including members of this House, feel that unions are too powerful, yet this proposed legislation would put a number of weak unions into a combined bargaining unit which would probably be greater than the sum of its parts.

If there is one negotiating force with respect to grain handling, can hon. members imagine what strength that force would have in negotiations? Can hon. members imagine what strength they would have to hamper the movement of grain and other products across the country?

This bill will not resolve the problem which exists. This is not just a matter of regressive legislation which would solve the problems we face; it is a matter of an attitude on the part of the private sector and government in relation to how things should be operating.

The President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Johnston) went to London, as a previous speaker mentioned, to speak to a Chamber of Commerce, to denounce workers in the public sector and to say that they have too much strength, which must be taken away. It disturbs me that he should go to a conference and make that type of allegation. When I asked him in committee today if he was willing to bring legislation before the House, he said he was not; but he is ready to go out and attack the workers and their bargaining rights at meetings of chambers of commerce and conference board meetings. Yet he is not ready to make a statement in this House or to bring in legislation. I think that demonstrates a poor attitude.

● (1740)

In committee today, the minister also said that the government is not willing to put government workers under the protection of Part IV of the Canada Labour Code which would bring them under the section that deals with occupational health and safety. The bill not only proposes to put the private sector and unions together but it seems to expect them to negotiate almost at the same time and almost on the same front.

Mr. Jelinek: Read the bill. It says "public sector."

Mr. Murphy: The government does not give even partial protection to workers who come under the jurisdiction, let alone the protection, of the Canada Labour Code. It will not even give them the protection of the occupational health and safety section. Instead, it takes the view that it can issue Treasury Board directives which will give the same protection. I do not think they are worth very much, Mr. Speaker. In 1972, Treasury Board issued directives to managers telling them to hire more women in the public service. An excellent report which was issued last year shows that this directive has not been followed. Treasury Board directives are not good enough in this area or in any other.

I wonder if it is possible for legislation of this type, whether it originates with the hon. member or with the government, to resolve the problems that exist in the areas of grain transportation, air travel and many other sectors of the economy. We certainly recognize the complaints as valid and honest.