

Supply—Labour

I might remind hon. members that next year is the fiftieth anniversary of the International Labour Organization, the oldest international organization in the world today. During the war years it established its base of operation in Montreal, particularly at McGill University, if I recall correctly.

I believe sufficient has been said about the auto pact. Certainly much has been said about the necessity of giving notice as far in advance as possible concerning lay-offs. The Economic Council has suggested a period of three months. I must in all fairness remind hon. members that many of the unions have included in their collective agreements provisions which prevent this type of grievance. Possibly some of the stronger unions will now be more militant in insisting upon incorporating clauses in their collective agreements which will provide for a longer period than is presently given.

It seems I have now covered all the points which have been made on clause 1. There are only four items in these estimates, and I am hoping to receive the co-operation of the committee in getting my estimates passed this evening. I should repeat that much of the legislation which is now the responsibility of the Minister of Labour needs drastic overhauling. I can think of no act, including the Labour (Standards) Code, and the Industrial Relations and Disputes Investigation Act, which I am called upon to administer, which does not need a thorough overhaul. It is my opinion therefore that the year 1969 will see much activity by members of all parties when we bring forward proposed legislation, and I would welcome the participation of members of all parties as early as possible, in any legislation which is proposed next year, possibly from the white paper stage. Certainly the Woods task report should be made available as early as possible, perhaps even before the holidays, in order that when we get back all parties can get together to formulate progressive legislation based on the recommendations of that report. Perhaps we could now move on from clause 1 and get on to the specific items which complete the estimates of my department.

Mr. Harding: I had hoped to get in a few words before the minister rose, so that he could answer the comments which I intend to make, as he did those of speakers who preceded me. I intend to be brief, but there are one or two points I feel I should put on

record as far as labour organizations are concerned, and as far as the labour picture in this country is concerned.

I listened with a great deal of interest when the minister indicated several days ago that collective bargaining as between labour and management is to continue. I think this is a very sound decision; it is one with which our party agrees. As the minister is aware, there are moves in certain parts of the country to change the nature of collective bargaining. Indeed, a delegation to this government was pressing very recently, I believe, for changes in this connection. I must say it was with relief that I heard the minister announce the other day that he had looked over the Freedman report and felt his department would have some interesting legislation to present to the house along the lines of the recommendations contained in it. As other hon. members have already dealt with this I do not intend to go over this item tonight.

• (9:40 p.m.)

I wish to make one or two comments on compulsory arbitration. I think every member of this house agrees that the fruits of the productivity of this nation should be shared to a much greater degree than we see at the present time. I am not thinking only in terms of labour unions which are strong enough to go to an employer and demand their share. Of course, the employer gets a larger share of the fruits of productivity in the form of larger profits. Another group of citizens must be considered. I am speaking of those on fixed incomes—pensioners, retired civil servants and other people in this category. They are the ones who frequently do not receive their fair share of the increased productivity of this nation. Those who sit in the seats of government, who govern this nation, make its laws and are in a position to change what is happening, are the ones who ought to be making certain that the fruits of our productivity are shared justly by all. Until we reach that stage we will not have the just society which our friends of the Liberal party talk about.

Much can be done to guarantee the people on fixed incomes that we will not erode the standard of living they now enjoy—poor as that may be—by increasing prices without at the same time increasing their initial pensions or fixed incomes. If the standard of living of this nation is to rise, and it is rising steadily, every individual in Canada should share in that prosperity. There is nothing wrong with that outlook.

Mr. Lewis: Hear, hear.