

Labour Relations

ment of a Canadian industrial relations council, and I quote:

Departments of labour and industrial relations in general have been well served by labour-management advisory committees in a number of jurisdictions in this country and abroad. We recommend that such a body be established at the federal level in Canada and that it be termed the "Canadian Industrial Relations Council". The council would be able, on its own initiative or on the request of the department, to examine all manner of industrial relations issues and to offer its advice and counsel, especially on proposed policy and program changes.

Then it lists further details of what the council would do. In the document to which I refer, which the Minister of Labour submitted to his cabinet colleagues some weeks ago, he outlined some of the difficulties facing the world of work, if we want to use that phrase, at the present time and on page 3 of that document he says, with considerable accuracy:

Some of the problems are of a structural nature in that there are too many bargaining points, too many bargaining agents and unions. The result, as any holiday traveller in Canada knows, is something as exciting as the Olympic lottery. As he embarks on his holiday, confident that the airline pilots are working and that the machinists are also on the job, there just may happen to be a walk-out of ticket clerks and other personnel. And even if all of these private sector employees are on the job, the trip could still be placed in jeopardy by collective action taken by air traffic controllers, technicians, airport electricians or firefighters. There are similar difficulties in the movement of grain—

I will say something about that in a moment.

—with risk of its steady flow being halted, if in the long stream handling the commodity, there is labour peace on the dockside but not on the ships or the waterways.

I would ask all hon. members, especially those on the government side, to take note of the next paragraph. The minister says:

It is clear that the system today lacks coherence and has a great potential for conflict.

On page 4 the document to which I refer goes on to say:

I am proposing, therefore, the establishment of the Canada Labour Relations Council as a mechanism that will go beyond one-shot, crisis or ritual consultation.

Our own objectives for the council would be:

- an alteration of bargaining structures so as to reduce the number of bargaining points,
- the utilization of structures for on-going relationships,
- to persuade the parties to adopt alternative modes of settlement of disputes so as to lessen impact of conflict on others if not on themselves,
- to ascertain what additional programs and services we should be providing in the way of support,
- to maximize the use of collective bargaining as a means of dividing the national product in a fair way.

So far as this party is concerned, at least as far as the minister has gone with respect to the direction in which the government is going the minister and the government have our support; but we are a little astounded to find, when we read pages 170 and 171 of the Woods report, that the things the minister is referring to today, in 1975, in his cabinet document were set out as part and parcel of the recommendations, considerations and deliberations of the Woods report which came to the government in 1968. I will not take the time to quote them, but they are there for hon. members to read.

Although I am a relatively new member, it was interesting for me to listen day in and day out, month after month,

for the last number of years to Liberal candidates and Liberal members over and over again saying that the Woods report would not work. We remember ministers of the Crown saying that it would not work.

Mr. Alexander: I remember that.

Mr. Fraser: Others in government have said that only rarely do we have to bring in legislation to end strikes and the ad hoc system we have followed is the best. However, the facts have overtaken them, and in the absence of any structured system which in an effective way involves labour, management and the government, the so-called ad hoc, occasional piece of legislation to end strikes has become a recurring pattern and it shows every sign of increasing. So we say that we support the minister and his recommendations but we ask him to remember that we have been saying since 1968 that this should have been done, and the government has said over and over again that it could not be done.

Mr. Stanfield: The government forgets bad meat, too.

Mr. Fraser: I know that the Minister of Labour will speak to us this afternoon. When he does, I wonder if he would elaborate on an article which appeared this morning in the *Globe and Mail* with respect to the industrial relations council which has just been announced by the minister's special assistant, Gordon McCaffrey. In this regard, it would not be amiss to suggest to the minister that when an important statement like this is to be made, it might be preferable that it be made in the House of Commons, with notice to the parties.

● (1620)

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Fraser: I say this conscious of the fact that the minister has known for some months that I have had his document and I am fairly familiar with the details. In any event, I think it would be in order if the minister were to elaborate this afternoon or, if this is not the occasion, if he would shortly make a statement on motions to explain the purpose and direction the government wishes to take, even though this is obvious and has the support of our party.

There is another matter which I think is of considerable importance, Mr. Speaker, and it fits in with the general tenor of the motion of the hon. member for Kamouraska. I refer to the question of illegal strikes. As the minister said when talking about the right to strike, that freedom, while unchallenged, is not absolute. The legal right to strike is not absolute, I think most people would agree, when it infringes to an inordinate degree on the public interest. But there can be no question about illegal strikes.

An extraordinarily interesting address was delivered at the convocation at Simon Fraser University, in Burnaby, British Columbia, last Saturday which I had the privilege of attending in an official capacity. The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada made a speech which was short and very much to the point. He said that if because we did not like a law, or thought a law inconvenient, or for any reason decided we could ignore a law, such an attitude would inevitably destroy the social fabric of the community and put an end to our freedoms and liberties. It is a