

Supply

B.C. I find it interesting that the gentleman, who is now the labour critic for the Progressive Conservative Party in this House, was formerly a Social Credit MLA in British Columbia from 1966 to 1972, because we can look to that province to see what kind of provincial labour code changes we are now getting.

While even Members of the Government as well as Tories and New Democrats realize that the legislation in Bill C-34 before us could be improved, at least we know that it is moving in a more healthy direction to protect the lives of working people than the regime which exists today. It is poles apart from what exists now, but the legislation in British Columbia is moving in exactly the opposite way.

Mr. St. Germain: You are in Ottawa.

Mr. Kristiansen: I wish some of my Conservative friends, who are trying to remind me that I am in Ottawa, would remember that they also come from British Columbia, and that they would learn some lessons from it. I know where I come from. I know what kind of workplace I come from and I know what kind of province I come from. I know that I and hundreds of thousands of their voters as well as my voters are fed up and disgusted with the kind of regressive policies we are seeing followed right now by that coalition of Liberals, Tories and Socreds who call themselves a Social Credit Government in the Province of British Columbia. "Catch the Spirit" was their slogan in 1983. Catch the bloody spirit when you take a look at the things happening in workplaces paid for and managed by their friends every day.

So many investigations have been carried out by that conservative government to the south of us in the last little while that it has become evident that that government is also moving to the right in terms of occupational health and safety and away from any civilized conduct in labour relations. The kind of activity investigated by committees of Congress has been disgusting, and I would like to mention one example. In *The New York Times* of Monday, April 9, 1984, it said:

Labour Department lawyers representing OSHA told the subcommittee staff at first that the documents were Mr. Vance's "personal property,"—

Mr. Vance was an officer of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration in the U.S. who was under investigation for some rather dubious deals between the OSHA and certain contractors who, members of Congress suspected were getting a rather easy ride from the government. It continues to read:

—not subject to a request or a subpoena addressed to Mr. Aucter or his boss, secretary of labour Raymond J. Donovan. The Labour Department reconsidered and informed the subcommittee that the department's lawyers were withdrawing that defence.

The requested documents still were not produced, and Mr. Vance subsequently told subcommittee investigators that he had stowed his office logs in the back of his pickup truck on a hunting trip and that his dog vomited on them. He said this had made the documents so 'disgusting' that he disposed of them in a rural Virginia dump.

That is also the disgusting nature of the apologists for that government in British Columbia, which tolerated manslaughter or murder in the workplace in past years and which

is now engaged in moving toward a regime of industrial relations that will again welcome those kinds of practices.

I am sure some Members will suggest later on in this debate that I am being wild in my accusations. I do not make personal accusations because it is not individual acts that we are talking about. That problem is often a curse in the area of industrial health and safety. It is not an individual problem. The fact that some people feel that we must learn to live with and tolerate industrial death and injury is the problem. There is a collective perception that this is something which just happens along the way to earning a living, and if people do not like it they can quit. This is the same type of philosophy espoused by some of the people from the Fraser Institute in relation to prostitutes being beaten up by their pimps. The Fraser Institute is the outfit that advises the Government of British Columbia. They say that if prostitutes do not like being beaten up, they can always quit. That is management's right. Those are his words taken from his recent book. That is the kind of philosophy which prevails there, in spite of the fact that we have made great advances as a civilization.

• (1550)

Earlier in this debate I heard a Conservative Member saying that the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Mulroney) understands the problem because he has respect for a lunch bucket, or whatever the rest of that garbage was. There is a difference between someone who has worked for wages in industry for a little while to work his way through school, and someone who is destined to work in heavy blue collar industry for the balance of his or her working life. It is the same as the difference between someone doing a weekend sentence for impaired driving and someone who is serving a life term in prison. Your attitude toward the institution is different. If you realize that you are there for life you take the problems which exist there a little more seriously. You learn very early that the idealistic conceptions of the law being fair are hogwash. The spirit of the law in North America or Europe was never designed to protect the lives or rights of working people in their workplaces. Initially, they were set up under the Magna Carta so that the barons would have a few more rights and the king would have a few less. It has not really changed that much.

I hope that some of the changes in Bill C-34 will provide for a regime which is a little more civilized, so that people who go to work and their spouses together will have a better chance of seeing their families at the end of the day. The toll is still too high. There are 1,500 people a year who are killed on the job in Canada and 20,000 a year who are disabled. That is more than we have lost in most combat situations in which the Canadian Armed Forces have been engaged. It is time to end it. Anything we can do to promote an end to that kind of regime and to get this welcome but limited legislation passed will be done. We will do all we can to co-operate with it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Are there questions or comments? The Hon. Member for Fraser Valley West (Mr. Wenman) on a question.