

anti-scab provisions to the Canada Labour Code and the Public Service Staff Relations Act.

I want to commend my Bloc Québécois colleague, the hon. member for Manicouagan, on his worthy initiative which I support with vigour and enthusiasm, and especially on the excellent speech he just made.

The purpose of this bill is to ensure there is no undue advantage to either party during negotiations, in order to reduce the duration of strikes and lockouts. Its objective is also to prevent violence during labour disputes.

The gist of this bill is as follows: To prohibit the hiring of persons to replace the employees of a federally-regulated employer who are on strike or locked out and employees of the Public Service who are on strike; and to ensure that essential services are maintained in the event of a strike or lockout in a Crown corporation and in the Public Service.

This bill takes its cue from similar provisions introduced in 1977 by the Parti Québécois government at the time to amend the Quebec Labour Code. Since then, Ontario and British Columbia have also passed anti-scab legislation. Today, 75 per cent of Canadian workers are covered by these provisions.

The legislation passed by the Quebec National Assembly on December 22, 1977, prohibiting the use of strike breakers during a labour dispute, was the first legislation of its kind in Canada. It was passed following some very violent strikes in the seventies, including the strike at Firestone and Canadian Gypsum and especially the long and difficult dispute at United Aircraft, now Pratt & Whitney. The strikers were members of my former union, the CAW, the Canadian Auto Workers.

Strikes are based on the principle that a work stoppage should be an incentive for the employer to agree to and offer better working conditions. If the employer can hire replacements for the strikers, the strike becomes useless, a costly burden to those who exercise this right recognized by the Canada Labour Code, the International Labour Organization and all democratic countries.

When workers involved in a labour dispute see they are replaced by other people who are often escorted by security guards, they become exasperated, frustrated and may even resort to violence. They are reacting to provocation, and the consequences are disastrous.

Quebec's adoption of anti-scab legislation was in response to strong pressure from the labour movement, and in particular from the FTQ. However, the unions criticized the weakness of the measures approved in 1977 and demanded the use of personnel to replace an employee locked out or on strike be absolutely prohibited.

In fact, the text of the legislation contained errors, which moved the Government of Quebec to propose new amendments to the

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Labour Code in 1983 in order to correct the discrepancies that appeared through its use and legal interpretation by the labour court, the superior court and the court of appeal.

Approximately 114,000 Quebec bank, federal public service, federal ports, telecommunications and transportation workers come under the Canada Labour Code.

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This number includes the 116 employees of the Ogilvie-ADM mills in Montreal, who are members of the CNTU and for whom June 6 marked the anniversary of their first year on strike. This dispute has gone on for over a year because of this American employer's use of scabs. These workers along with the entire labour movement in Quebec and Canada have long called for anti-scab legislation federally.

This afternoon, I met a group of strikers on Parliament Hill, who are currently in the gallery. I would like to salute them and all the workers of Ogilvie-ADM, show them my support and express the hope that a reasonable solution may be found quickly.

I understand their frustrations, because I worked for 19 years at the FTQ, where I witnessed and experienced similar disputes. This dispute is deteriorating because of a skewed balance of power. I also support the campaign waged by the CNTU and the FTQ for the inclusion of anti-scab provisions in the Canada Labour Code.

On September 18, 1992, an explosion at the Giant Gold mine in Yellowknife killed nine miners during a strike in which the employer had hired scabs. This tragedy could have been avoided with anti-scab legislation. This conflict lasted 18 months, ending only in December 1993. Last January, an individual was convicted of causing that explosion.

An anti-scab law would, of course, significantly reduce the risks of violence on picket lines. Under the previous, Tory government, the Liberals supported such legislation. Since they came to power in 1993, they have moved to the right and changed their position. The Minister of Human Resources Development had promised to table an anti-scab bill in December 1994. He did not keep his word.

The new Minister of Labour now uses the excuse that she intends to propose a more extensive reform of the Canada Labour Code, arguing that this legislation has not been amended in 20 years. The Minister of Labour, who is the hon. member for the wealthy riding of Westmount, is even more insensitive than her predecessor in this regard.

She is probably afraid of hurting the interests of her wealthy constituents. Yet, the Ogilvie workers, whose plant is located at the boundary of the minister's riding, are still waiting for her to help resolve this dispute as she promised.

Once again, I ask the government to be consistent with the positions defended by its members when they were in opposition and to table an anti-scab bill to prevent labour disputes from deteriorating and dragging on needlessly. We already know that the