

Senator Doody: Honourable senators, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the minister for his attendance here today. We hope to see him back from time to time.

Senator Frith: But not at the end of a session or sitting.

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: Honourable senators, the sitting of the Senate is resumed.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Hon. Rhéal Bélisle: Honourable senators, the Committee of the Whole, to which was referred Bill C-101, to amend the Excise Tax Act, has examined the said bill and has directed me to report the same to the Senate without amendment.

THIRD READING

The Hon. the Speaker *pro tempore*: Honourable senators, when shall this bill be read the third time?

Hon. Finlay MacDonald, with leave of the Senate and notwithstanding rule 45(1)(b), moved that the bill be read the third time now.

Motion agreed to and bill read third time and passed.

[Translation]

CANADA LABOUR CODE

BILL TO AMEND—CONSIDERED IN COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

On the Order:

The Senate in Committee of the Whole on the Bill C-97, an Act to amend the Canada Labour Code.

The Senate was accordingly adjourned during pleasure and put into a Committee of the Whole on the bill, the Honourable Rhéal Bélisle in the Chair.

Pursuant to rule 18 of the rules of the Senate, the Honourable Pierre H. Cadieux, Minister of Labour, was escorted to a seat in the Senate chamber.

The Chairman: Honourable senators, I wish to welcome the Honourable Pierre Cadieux. May I ask him whether he wants to make a statement?

Hon. Pierre H. Cadieux (Minister of Labour): Thank you.
[English]

It is a pleasure to be here for the fourth time, but perhaps for the first time to deal with a non-controversial bill or bills.

Senator Frith: Famous last words!

Senator Argue: Tell us about the progress at Prince Rupert.

Mr. Cadieux: If you wish, I could answer that. However, if you do not mind, I will complete my introductory remarks. I will then be at your disposal.

I am here to answer as many questions as possible. I would like to concentrate on this important legislation, but if you

have a question with regard to the grain handlers' strike at Prince Rupert I would be pleased to answer it.

Senator Argue: If my colleagues would forgive me, I would ask the minister if he would mind giving us the answer.

Senator Doody: Can we start with the bill?

Senator Argue: Whatever you say. I am not in charge.

Mr. Cadieux: As soon as both bills are completed, I will answer your question, senator.

Senator Frith: That is a matter of timing, not a condition.

The Chairman: Honourable senators, the Senate is in Committee of the Whole on Bill C-97, to amend the Canada Labour Code.

Shall discussion on the title of the bill be postponed?

Hon. Senators: Agreed.

The Chairman: Who would like to begin with questions? Shall clause 1 carry?

Senator Frith: Is the minister not going to give us a statement?

The Chairman: Senator Marsden.

Senator Marsden: I would like to ask some questions of the minister. They relate to several clauses of the bill, and not specifically to clause 1. May I ask them now?

The Chairman: Yes.

Senator Marsden: The minister probably knows that we think this bill fills a gap. There has been a loophole that needed to be closed, and we are glad you are closing it. We are in favour of this bill.

Could you tell us whether there are further loopholes of this nature, on which you intend to move in the near future, affecting employees under the Canada Labour Code?

Mr. Cadieux: As you know, senator, there were some amendments that were brought forward in 1984 which came into effect in 1985. To my knowledge, the only loophole that existed is the one that we are dealing with right now. We are very pleased to move on this particular amendment in order to close that loophole, because that was not the intent of the legislation at the time. We were informed of the loophole. We thought it was unfair, and we have moved as swiftly as possible.

As you know, this bill was passed without difficulty in the other place with the support and recommendations of the other parties. Obviously some unions were consulted in the process of drafting this amendment.

Senator Marsden: You understand, of course, that there is unanimous support, and we are part of that support. However, there are still difficulties for employees who are on maternity leave or who are absent under the provisions of this bill. For example, employees do not receive their full pay in most conditions when they are on such leave. Yet, they have to continue paying benefits or paying their portion of benefits.