

Maintenance of Ports Operations Act, 1986

Mr. Murphy: Mr. Chairman, I think the Minister's answer still raises a lot of questions. Terms of reference are one thing; what actually happens with the recommendations is something else. That is the major problem with setting up this inquiry. It will only have the power to act in one area with regard to recommendations. It will be able to write a clause, include a clause in the collective agreement on the container issue, or remove a clause. It can make all sorts of other recommendations, some of which will go to the Department of Transport, some of which may go to the employer, and some of which may go to the employees. However, the point is that if the other bodies do not feel like acting, nothing will happen. That is a real problem facing the workers.

They have some security with the present clause in the collective agreement. That could be taken from them and no other agency of Government, the employer or anyone else must act on the recommendations. Only the container clause will be binding on the parties. There is no need to act on the other recommendations.

I know the difficulties involved in getting labour legislation passed in the House of Commons. There has only been one decent piece of legislation introduced during the seven years I have been a Member of Parliament. That was the legislation on occupational health and safety and maternity leave clause extensions. It took four years before the Government even bothered to introduce that legislation and it was almost killed at the last moment before the election. When one considers the history of how the House of Commons deals with labour legislation, I am not very optimistic about what the Minister just said.

We need some guarantees that if there are other recommendations, they will be acted upon by the Government. We cannot simply tell the workers to accept whatever comes down from the Commissioner because Parliament will look after the other recommendations that may be imposed. History has proven that the House of Commons will not act quickly on the recommendations that affect the job security of workers.

Mr. Foster: Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the support of the Hon. Member for Churchill on this amendment. This issue has existed for 16 years. It is obvious that the Government, in concert with the employers association, plans to remove this clause. Surely it is not asking too much of the Government to include in the legislation the consideration of these other factors. There is the whole question of job security, the development of the port, the improvements that will be made, and the requirement for the port to be competitive so that we will in fact be moving containers back from Tacoma and Seattle.

I believe that if the industrial Commissioner ends up removing that container clause as recommended in the conciliation officer's report, he would feel much better if he described everything that must take place in order for that port to become competitive, attract additional containers, maintain and hopefully increase the number of jobs. I hope the Minister

not only agrees to do this in the report but will agree to do it in the legislation itself.

Amendment (Mr. Foster) negatived: Yeas, 10; Nays, 30.

Mr. Murphy: Mr. Chairman, I rise on a point of order. We gave notice before that we were having trouble with Conservative Members coming in when the vote already commenced. I think it is incumbent upon the Conservative Whip to have his Members here before the vote commences. It is not too difficult for them to stay here for the next 25 minutes and listen to the debate, instead of wandering in when they choose.

● (1620)

Mr. Lewis: On the same point of order, Mr. Chairman, I think it should also be pointed out to the House that Hon. Members on the government side are allowing full rein and discussion on the opposition amendments.

Ms. Mitchell: Allowing? Do we have rights?

Mr. Lewis: It would be very easy for every one of us to be in here speaking to the opposition amendments. Instead, we are carrying on business in the lobby behind the curtains. If the Hon. Member wishes plenty of discussion on every one of the opposition amendments, we will get into it.

Ms. Mitchell: Okay. Go ahead.

Mr. Lewis: But I think we are doing the business of the House and we should proceed.

Ms. Copps: Mr. Chairman, I have another amendment.

The Chairman: On Clause 7?

Ms. Copps: Yes. I think we predicted that the previous amendment would not pass, so I have an amendment to Bill C-24 which has also been handed to the Minister as well as to the New Democratic Party. I move:

That Bill C-24, an Act to provide for the maintenance of ports operations, be amended in Clause 7 by striking out line 1 at page 4 and substituting the following therefor.

"this Act applies, including provisions for job security, and such other matters relat-"

I think if you refer, for example, Mr. Chairman, to the recommendations of the Larson Report, the section which is being deleted, that is, you will find that the question of containers which is being referred to this commission deals in part with the question of job security because it suggests that there be a guarantee that the number of hours available to be worked on containers be fixed at 725,000 per year. So I do believe this amendment is within the terms of reference of the commission. It also speaks specifically to one of the concerns which has been expressed by the longshoremen, and that is, the question of job security. Surely, if we are going to look at the container question as an isolated case, we should have a more wideranging view. Even if we are restricting our commission specifically to looking at the container situation, I think this