

Government Orders

As for scabs, I tabled a motion concerning strike-breakers. I am not too familiar with the Nationair situation because Nationair does not serve Abitibi. But I did table a motion on strike-breakers and I am eager to win the draw to be able to discuss the issue more thoroughly. We still remember that the member who started the debate on strike-breakers is a Conservative who has been here for years. He did not present the bill a second time and I presented it on behalf of the Canada Post workers because I am against strike-breakers during strikes.

[*English*]

Mr. Robert D. Nault (Kenora—Rainy River): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to be involved in this debate today on Bill C-101.

I would like to make some general comments and then get involved in some specifics. After that I will talk in general terms about some of the problems I see with the bill.

The government and particularly the Minister of Labour have placed us in a difficult position. The minister has introduced a bill which is not unusual to this place and most parts of the bill are good amendments to a particular piece of legislation that we in this House would like to see implemented. He has also put amendments in the bill which are hard for some of us to live with and I will deal with that.

I would like to talk specifically about the good parts of the bill: industrial relations; occupational safety and health and standards of hours, wages, vacations and holidays. I will save the labour relations portion of it for later.

Under the first two parts the government has implemented good pieces of legislation and good amendments to the Canada Labour Code. It is obvious to all who have been listening in this House for the last hour the majority of those amendments being put forward was done so with the consultation and agreement of all parties who were involved in this piece of legislation.

The hours of work part permits the averaging of hours of work over a period of two or more weeks where the nature of the work requires irregular distribution of work hours. Consultation took place relating to that amendment and all parties agree that is a good thing.

The substitution of holidays permits the substitution of any other holiday for a general holiday in certain

circumstances. That is with written agreement of the employer and the trade union and consultation took place in that regard.

Maternity related reassignment and leave is a project that my colleague from Abitibi has been putting forward in this House for many years, as long as I have been here. It is one I have spoken on during his private member's motion in the not-too-distant past.

It is a good amendment because it protects pregnant women in the work force who are looking for maternity related reassignment because of the necessity of caring for their children and when they are in the process of having children. That amendment has been highly touted. It has been consulted thoroughly throughout the labour movement and agreed to by this House.

There is the issue of work related illness and injury. This is very interesting and should be looked at very carefully in committee. Work related illness and injury has always been a bone of contention and I will use the railway industry as an example. It is one that I know very well.

It is a known fact in the railway industry that when there are work related injuries and illnesses employees are subjected to discipline. It is very easy in the railway industry to suggest that an employee maintained an unsafe work practice which caused the illness or work related injury. An individual is given demerit marks in that situation and if enough are accumulated that individual is dismissed.

Under the proposed amendment the regulations of the work related illness and injury proposal are the keys. What are the regulations the Minister of Labour is suggesting? They are important. The possibility of reassignment for the employees and how that will be done in certain industries like the railway will have to be looked at very carefully.

We on this side of the House are very concerned that the Minister of Labour has come forward with an amendment to the Canada Labour Code without the consultation of the organized labour unions and groups in this country. We on this side of the House feel it is very difficult for us to support this bill without some very significant amendments. We feel very let down by the Minister of Labour because he has not given the consultation process an opportunity to work before slipping in the amendment he has referred to as a proposal for a directed vote on the employer's last offer.