

Labour Conditions

And the different crown corporations such as the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Trans-Canada Air Lines, as well as all the corporations established by the Canadian parliament.

I feel that, in so doing, the federal government would set an example not only for private enterprise but also for our various provincial legislatures.

After such a measure had been passed, it would be a good thing to call a federal-provincial conference to discuss whether it would be advisable for the provinces to follow in the footsteps of the Canadian parliament so that in each of them there would be legislation prohibiting all forms of discrimination towards persons and workers of 45 years and over.

That legislation should provide severe penalties for employers who do not obey it. I am also thinking of the suggestion submitted a few years ago by the hon. member for Oxford that a tax deduction be granted to industries employing a certain number of workers aged 45 and over. I think that that suggestion should be taken into consideration.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I should like to appeal to every hon. member in this house, regardless of their party to become conscious of that problem and, by supporting this notice of motion, to ask the government, and especially the Minister of Labour, to introduce at this session legislation conceived to remove that discrimination.

Mr. Marcel Lessard (Lake St. John): Mr. Speaker, I do not want to take up too much of the time of this house, but I want to take advantage of the debate on this notice of motion presented by the hon. member for Dollard (Mr. Rouleau) to support the remarks he has just made in this house.

Being myself a working man, I have been in a position to notice on the spot, as he did, the problem that arises in our economy today because citizens 45 years old and over cannot easily find employment in our country.

This is an unfortunate situation because in plants employees 45 years of age and over are usually the most qualified to do the work, and I feel that their experience and steadiness deserve to be taken into consideration.

I am of the opinion that it would be fully to the advantage of our industry to give special attention to the workers 45 years old and over.

I think that those people, more so than anybody else, have their employer's interests at heart. Through their experience and the work they have done in the past, I think they render the employer and the businessman a service that cannot be expected from a young

[Mr. Rouleau.]

man starting in this kind of work. The young man's assets are his spirit, his energy, his good will, but on the other hand he has against him his lack of experience in many fields and sometimes he is not serious enough.

I, myself, had the experience of directing groups of men at work, and I can assure the house that it is much easier to direct men of 45 years and over and obtain from them a reasonable maximum effort.

Mr. Speaker, this notice of motion from the hon. member for Dollard deserves to be considered by the Minister of Labour (Mr. Starr). I invite him to think it over and I beg the members and the government to consider in more detail the case of our citizens who find it difficult now to get employment because of their age.

That also underlines the fact that very often, our citizens who are compelled to retire at the age of 65, cannot maintain a reasonable standard of living because of the small pension they receive. That is why pressure is brought to bear more and more on our legislators so that the age at which a person can receive the old age pension be lowered to 65. Thus, those Canadians could, at the time they retire, have a sufficient income and enjoy the same standard of living as their fellow citizens.

The members of our group support the motion introduced by the hon. member for Dollard and, in my opinion, the government should take it into consideration.

If our economy were healthier, I am sure we would easily find some employment for those people and would gladly give them some work.

As a proof of that, one merely has to recall the war years. At that time, even people over 70 had permanent employment to help meet our needs. I feel that if we were in a similar situation today, we would once again call upon those people to fill the vacancies on the labour market.

Without further ado, I wish to assure the hon. member for Dollard of the wholehearted support of our group.

(Text):

Mr. M. W. Martin (Timmins): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have the opportunity today to say a few words on this most serious problem which is highlighted by the motion presented by the hon. member for Dollard (Mr. Rouleau). This is a very serious problem.