treatment of the public service aspect of grain handling was national in scope due to the certification structures dictated by the Public Service Staff Relations Act, its approach to rationalization of bargaining points on an integrated industry basis was limited to the port of Vancouver for a variety of economic, market, industrial relations and collective bargaining reasons.

For the purposes of its investigations, the commission proceeded on the basis that "wider-based collective bargaining" is any restructuring or coalition of the present system of bargaining which assists in reducing the high degree of fragmentation of unions and/or management units, hence, the current proclivity for sequential work disturbances and shutdowns which exist within certain industries.

The motivation for this commission's inquiry was a consideration of the socioeconomic interest of the public as well as of the interests of employers and employees within the collective bargaining process. The commission endeavoured to identify those structural disabilities which may unnecessarily impede productive bargaining between the principal parties to the process. Its fundamental thrust was to obviate the damage which such inherent defects in the bargaining structure may inflict on members of the general public who are not otherwise involved in or parties to the process. I thank my hon. colleague for sending me a note so that I could outline that.

The paramountcy of the public interest and the legislatively enshrined commitment to the process of free collective bargaining do not exist in isolation. Recent and continued conflict between these principles can no longer be ignored or denigrated by the parties. There is no question that unresolved bargaining disputes in the key industries reviewed by the commission are injurious to the public and the economy. That is not the question here.

So too are the uncertainties of operating productively a public or private enterprise while the potential for perpetual bargaining disputes clouds rational planning. Canadian citizens have the inviolable right to be protected, not only in respect of their health, safety and general welfare, but as well against inconvenience and disadvantages of an economic and social nature.

It has become increasingly clear that the public interest depends greatly on the development of orderly and constructive relationships between employers and their employees. To the extent that existing bargaining structures require adjustment in order to facilitate such development, it is in the interest of all parties, including the public, that such changes be effected. It was to that end that the commission dedicated its energies.

It is the structure within which parties bargain collectively, and not the bargaining process itself, which is the key to the issue here. A major aspect of this structural component is the occupational interrelationship and the legislative duality that arises from the application of two federal labour jurisdictions, that is, the Canada Labour Code and the Public Service Staff Relations Act. To assist employer and employee groups in the voluntary resolution and adjustment of many of the dysfunctional elements of their relationship, the commission recommended the establishment of an independent mediation and conciliation agency that would be tailored to function in the entire federal sector. The commission subscribed unequivocally to the principle of free collective bargaining as the preferable method of resolving labour-management relations issues, as opposed to artificial solutions imposed by others.

Finally, the commission dismissed as impractical the belief, widely held in some quarters of Canadian society, that the right to strike or lockout, whether in public or private sectors, should be banned.

• (1730)

A little earlier the hon. member said the unions are starting to use their power—I believe his term was "out of proportion to what it should be".

Mr. Jelinek: Abuse.

Mr. Parent: The hon. member is correcting that now.

The unions have bargained for and gained the power they have, and in most cases their power is used judiciously. I would no more want to legislate unions and strikes out of existence per se than I would want to say private industry should not be making profits in excess of "X" amounts. I do not think it is the business of this legislative body to do that.

The commission also held such belief to be unworkable since evidence indicates that restrictive legislation does not in itself prevent strikes. Further, I feel it necessary to add that such proposals as Bill C-239 are simplistic because they make no attempt to address the fundamental realities of the bargaining process. I strongly and respectfully suggest that there is no point whatsoever in pursuing Bill-239 as it will not improve the climate of industrial relations in Canada.

I would like to make one more point before giving the floor to my colleagues. The hon. member stated that Canada led the world in the number of strike days lost. I suggest that if the figures were taken from the International Labour Organization, that organization does do not always use the same basis for counting the number of days lost. It is for that reason that Canada may indeed be faring much better than indicated a little while ago.

I hope all hon. members will consider my suggestions in their deliberations.

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to have this opportunity to speak on this bill which, on its surface, appears to be good. It appears to be popular. Anyone involved in the grain trade, whether he be a farmer, someone working in a port facility or someone who derives his income from farms or port facilities, would like it because it seems to indicate there would be fewer strikes and less cost to the people involved in those sectors.

It is popular to refer to problems in the air travel industry and to suggest there should be fewer strikes and interruptions faced by consumers of air services. This bill is based on what I consider to be a false assumption that the unions of this