

Labour Conditions

the economy is really rolling; and yet this fellow has not had a job since the Liberals came into office. He said: "Yes the Minister of Finance is right; I have never had an easier or nicer time in all my life. I had been employed all my life until two years ago, but have been unemployed for the last two years. Yes, the Minister of Finance is right".

Mr. Gray: Would the hon. member permit a question. Is the person to whom he is referring a defeated Tory candidate?

Mr. Nielsen: No; as a matter of fact he is a Liberal living in Ontario. However I want to direct a serious observation to the minister with respect to the application of this act.

The minister will have noted—I did raise this question with him privately—that the Yukon and Northwest Territories are specifically singled out as exceptions to the application of this act. I cannot for the life of me think of any reason for this. Like the provinces the Yukon—and I can speak knowledgeably of the Yukon in this specific instance—has an act, the Yukon Act, under section 16 of which the legislative council of the Yukon has exclusive jurisdiction over the same class of subject matter as do the provinces. Labour is one of them, it being a matter of a local or private nature. I am wondering why these two territories have been singled out as exceptions. I hope the minister will reply before we get into committee because it may be that an error has been made and that an amendment will be necessary to eliminate the exceptions which have been made of the two territories.

The labour provisions ordinance governs working conditions and hours of work in the Yukon territory. That ordinance was passed pursuant to the exclusive legislative jurisdictional authority which has been placed in the Yukon legislative council by the federal Yukon Act. I believe the situation is the same in the Northwest Territories, but my colleague from the Northwest Territories (Mr. Rhéaume) will be able to enlarge upon that.

May I say to the minister that clause 3 is one more indication why it becomes essential for federal-provincial conferences, where such matters are discussed, to include members who are familiar with the affairs in each of these territories to act at least as observers so that they can be asked questions first hand. My colleague from the Northwest Territories has on several occasions, as I have myself, advocated that when these conferences are held there should be represen-

tation on them, either by way of observers or otherwise, from the two territories. This sort of thing would be remedied if that first hand advice could be sought.

I imagine that when the minister speaks later on he will be giving the house some explanation as to how he expects this legislation to tie in with existing legislation in the provinces and the territories. Under the labour provisions ordinance in the Yukon, for instance, the minimum work week is 44 hours, except in the case of miners, who are required to work 48 hours a week.

I believe this legislation is desirable. We have been waiting a long time for this type of thing. It can do nothing but benefit the workers in my riding, and I am sure the workers right throughout Canada. The quicker the legislation is on the statute books, the better we will all be for it. With the request to the minister, then, that in closing the debate he answer the specific question I put to him with regard to clause 3, so that if there is need for an amendment I might discuss it with him perhaps privately and be helpful in suggesting a method of procedure, I have no further comments to make.

[*Translation*]

Mr. G. C. Lachance (Lafontaine): Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure to join with the hon. members for Ontario (Mr. Starr), Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), Red Deer (Mr. Thompson), Lapointe (Mr. Grégoire), Hamilton (Mr. Munro), Yukon (Mr. Nielsen) and others, to congratulate the Minister of Labour for the courage and tenacity he has shown in preparing and presenting the piece of legislating dealing with hours of work, minimum wages, paid annual leave and holidays for federal projects, enterprises and businesses, in brief, a Canadian code of working standards which has long been awaited.

Mr. Speaker, a nation which has the courage to adopt progressive labour legislation shows that it is mature and this constitutes an excellent example for many other countries in the world.

I have no trouble reconciling my remarks today with respect to the legislation under consideration with the personal views I expressed on March 6 and June 12 last, when the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre introduced bills dealing with related questions.

I cannot let this opportunity go by without saying that I have no difficulty at all in doing so because, last October 7, the press gallery correspondent of a certain Montreal