

arguments and to review the basis of our own views on the bill.

I would like to take a close look at some of the arguments that were put forward by the hon. member for Richelieu in support of the bill, especially those that deal with the duration of strikes. In this regard, I have to ask whether or not it is realistic to expect the proposed legislation to have the beneficial effects on strikes that the hon. member claims it is likely to have.

Before doing so, I will make a few observations on the level of strike activity in recent years. This is important because it gives us an indication of the environment that prevails today, compared to the 1970s and the 1980s.

One observation that I think should be made off the top is that the level of strike activity in Canada has been generally less than what it was in the early 1980s and the late 1970s. For example, the average number of strikes in existence per year over the five-year period, covering 1985 to 1989, was 683. This is a considerable reduction from an average of 823 for the previous five-year period, covering 1980 to 1984, and from an average of 1,024 strikes in the last five-year period of the 1970s.

There has also been a downward trend in the number of person-days not worked during work stoppages. Very briefly, the notion of person-days takes into account the number of workers involved in strikes, as well as the period of days that each individual worker is not at work because of a strike or lock-out.

The number of person-days not worked per year in the later half of the 1980s has been reduced considerably from earlier years. In comparison with the later half of the 1970s, the number of person-days not worked during work stoppages has fallen by almost half. There is clearly a downward trend in the level of strike and lock-out activity over the period.

We can place this amount of working time lost during work stoppages in the perspective of a measure of over-all production time for the labour force and arrive at an estimate of the percentage of working time forgone during work stoppages. In the later half of the 1980s, the percentage of estimated working time lost during work stoppages amounted to 0.17 per cent, compared to approximately 0.25 per cent in the first half of the 1980s, and 0.38 per cent for the last half of the 1970s. Significantly, the figures for the last half of the 1980s reflect a

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reduction in the amount of production time lost during work stoppages of approximately one-half. The figures reflect an absolute reduction, as well as a reduction relative to the amount of production time available in the workforce.

With this brief overview of the trend in work stoppages in Canada, I would like to turn now to some of the remarks made by the hon. member for Richelieu regarding the trends in work stoppages that he associates with the anti-scab legislation in the province of Quebec.

The hon. member for Richelieu indicated in his remarks on May 31 in the House that he obtained data in support of his support for Bill C-201 from a study by the Quebec organization *Le Centre de recherche et de statistiques sur le marché du travail*. The title of the study is *Les briseurs de grève et le code du travail*, and it was published in 1982. It is interesting to look closely at this study since it is one of the few studies on the effects of the anti-scab legislation adopted in the province of Quebec in 1977, and because it is the empirical foundation of the hon. member's remarks.

The data in the study covers two periods, the six-year period prior to the introduction of the anti-scab legislation, 1972 to 1977, and the three-year period following its adoption, 1978 to 1980. There are a very few brief observations that I would like to make concerning the comparisons made in the study on the effects of the legislation.

• (1900)

The study indicates that prior to the introduction of the legislation, 27 work stoppages representing 4 per cent of the total number of work stoppages in the period, were work stoppages in which employers made use of replacement workers. In the period following the introduction of the legislation, the incidence of such work stoppages increased to 56, representing 5 per cent of the total number of all work stoppages.

It is interesting to note that in the two time periods in this comparison, there was a reduction in the average number of workers involved in all work stoppages while the number of workers involved in work stoppages in which replacement workers were used almost tripled from 166 to 479 workers. I caution any hon. members against rushing to conclusions on this information, except to note that perhaps replacement workers tend to