

that. In addition to the idea of a holiday, or whatever you call it, there is merit in the concept of the idea of calling it Heritage Day. There are groups and organizations in this country working very hard to help us appreciate and protect the heritage that we have. A day dedicated to that concept is a good one. I hope the minister will not feel that his cabinet colleagues have crowded him in so much that he cannot move on this, and I hope that when we get into committee on the bill Heritage Day can be put into the legislation.

I see the minister has put in the bill a new provision respecting vacations with pay. We have not had such vacations in the law very long, and up to the present time the holiday provided in the law is only two weeks. The minister now proposes that for an employee coming under federal labour jurisdiction who has been six years with the same employer, holiday pay or the period of vacation with pay is to be extended to three weeks. This is an improvement. It is in line with the bill I have been putting into the House year after year for a long time. However, why make such employees wait six years? When such an employee happens to leave one employer and goes to another, he will have to start all over again. Why cannot the idea of three weeks' holidays with pay start after a shorter period of time than six years? Even five or four years would be better; but I suggest it should start after three years with an employer.

The third point I want to raise with the minister has to do with the whole business of health and safety. I have been sitting here trying to think what year it was that the first legislation under the Canada Labour Code having to do with health and safety was brought in. It was when John Nicholson was minister of labour. Many members will not remember those days. It would be during the regime of Mr. Pearson as prime minister. I remember very clearly that bill to provide a safety code section of the Canada Labour Code being referred to the standing committee. We dealt with it at some length because we were concerned about it. I think it was in the month of December, probably 1965, 1966 or 1967. The minister made a strong appeal asking us to get the bill through so that the officials in the department could draft the regulations and the whole regime of health and safety could be put in place. Ten years have gone by. Some of it has been done, but ever so slowly. My contacts with officers of the Department of Labour who are involved in this question lead me to believe that they are keen on it. They want to push for health and safety in the work place, but somewhere there seems to be some force holding them back.

Every time the workers in the CPR Weston shops, which lie between my constituency and that of my friend from Winnipeg North, complain about fumes or other conditions in the shops that are contrary to health and safety, they have to go through a lot of rigmarole and red tape. In the end, very little is done. I certainly do not blame the officials and public servants in the department. They are keen on it. However, somebody is saying, "No. Go slowly on this." It is like the voices we hear sometimes in this debate about increasing the cost of production if we give people holidays or good rates of pay. Our view

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is that if you make working conditions healthy and safe, and you provide adequate holidays, rates of pay and all the rest, productivity will be a lot better. I welcome what the minister has proposed in the health and safety part of the Canada Labour Code, but I ask him for a little more speed in putting the new proposals into effect than has been the case since we first put health and safety in there ten or 11 years ago.

As I have already said, we welcome any bill that improves labour relations. We shall study this one very carefully. I hope that special attention will be paid to the three points I have made at this time.

Hon. Stanley Haidasz (Parkdale): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to make a few remarks on the amendments to the Canada Labour Code, Bill C-8, and to congratulate the hard-working Minister of Labour (Mr. Munro) for bringing in such progressive amendments to the Labour Code—a real milestone in the long line of improvements in labour legislation initiated by Liberal administrations. Of course, primarily affected by this legislation are workers under federal jurisdiction, but its principles will no doubt be an inspiration and example for other jurisdictions to emulate.

As a physician, I am particularly interested and happy that the bill proposes comprehensive measures for the safety and health of workers. I am sure that all in this House agree with the minister that Canadian workers have a fundamental right to an environment that neither damages their health nor imperils their safety. This principle is also an important element in the maintenance of improved employee-employer relations and, consequently, improved productivity and profitability.

I am particularly interested in the minister's announcement as far as a better work environment for Canadians is concerned, and establishing a Canadian centre for occupational health and safety. There is a great need today for such a national institution. Such a centre would promote the concept of a safe-work environment and the enhancement of the physical and mental health of working people throughout the country. It would facilitate consultation and co-operation among provincial, territorial and federal jurisdictions in the establishment and maintenance of high standards of occupational safety and hygiene appropriate to the Canadian situation and compatible with recognized international standards.

I have in mind, in particular, the need for research and enforcement of appropriate regulations for the workers in asbestos mines and asbestos-related industries, and also special and strict standards to protect the worker from deafness which occurs from the occupational hazard of noise which often occurs in factories. It is imperative that this centre co-operate with the various workmen's compensation boards of the provinces in this country, in order to have special committees established to deal more quickly with those workers who have been injured on the job, and especially those who after many years in mines and asbestos-related factories have suffered damage to their lungs, liver and other vital organs of their bodies.