

(c) That the said legislation shall be deemed to be returned to the House for report stage and third reading no later than June 28, 1984.

The subject matter of the legislation before us is so important and so vital to the lives and livelihoods of millions of Canadians that there is little, if anything, that our Party would not do in order to expedite its movement through second reading to committee and through third reading, in the hopes that it could be proclaimed before this Parliament is prorogued.

Approximately 1,500 Canadian workers are killed on the job every year. Approximately 20,000 Canadian workers are disabled on the job every year. During the time in which we conduct our debate today there is a very good chance that more than one worker will die and a certainty that many will be disabled. We have already waited some three years—that is almost the gestation period of an elephant—for these amendments to Parts III, IV and V of the Canada Labour Code. We cannot perceive of any reasonable excuse which anyone could have for not wishing to expedite these matters.

I would like to make a few rather personal comments on the legislation before us and on the kind of problems we face, especially in the industrial work places of Canada. I am at least one Member of this House for which this is not an academic subject by any stretch of the imagination. I do not know how many other Hon. Members have had the dubious privilege of having to sweep their workmate's brain off the pavement, or how many other Hon. Members here have had to go on more than one occasion to visit a newly widowed woman to tell her that her husband and your friend has been killed just within the last few minutes. I am sure everyone here will understand that it is not a pleasant task.

I also think back to a story I heard a year ago here in the City of Ottawa, or perhaps it was across the river in Hull. The young son of a woman who works for an Hon. Member of this House, a member of the Conservative Party, was killed in an industrial accident in this area. He was a young boy who had been given absolutely no training for the task which he was required to do. He fell or slipped into a piece of grinding machinery used for grinding up garbage, and as an old German workmate of mine used to say in our sawmill at Kootenay Forest Products, "One day comes home the hamburger". It is not pretty. Anyone who has seen the remains of people we have known and loved being poured into a box will agree it is not the kind of experience that makes one very patient with the kind of political horse trading—some of it for very dubious purposes—which seems to be taking place around this piece of legislation.

● (1540)

I am certainly not suggesting that anyone here would knowingly want to continue a regime which has encouraged the continuation of practices in industry which lead to so many fatalities and injuries every year. I know better than that. No one here wants that to happen. But sometimes by doing nothing we contribute to that continuation. While I know that none of us individually want to be responsible or see ourselves

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as being responsible for that kind of situation, there is a vast difference in the attitudes of governments of different political stripes when it comes to the emphasis placed on matters relating to life and death in the workplace.

I want to take Members back to a situation that existed prior to 1972 in the Province of British Columbia because it is relevant to our personal and political scale of priorities in regard to this issue. Since the 1930s there was legislation in British Columbia called the Factories Act. Many of us, including those in leadership positions in the labour movement and even people who worked for the Department of Labour in that province, were not aware of the existence of that legislation even though it had been on the books for almost 40 years. I and a few of my workmates found an old moth-eaten copy one day and we said, "Hey, this looks pretty good. It has some protective clauses here requiring lighting and ventilation in the workplace, the number of washrooms required per 100 employees and a whole host of things that could make many industrial workplaces much more civilized institutions." We asked some questions, but no one knew anything about it. We phoned the Department of Labour in Victoria, but no one had ever heard of it. Then, after the change from a Social Credit coalition government in early 1972 to an NDP administration we found that there were only two inspectors who were responsible for enforcing that legislation in the entire province. They must have been hiding in a closet somewhere for 35 years, but they were supposedly responsible. We immediately started hiring extra people to enforce the law, and we asked these two people how they ever accomplished their job. They were hired not only to inspect all existing industrial installations and factories in B.C., but to inspect every new work site before it went into operation. We asked how the two of them ever did that for the thousands and thousands of factories and workplaces throughout that province. They said, "Oh, we did telephone book inspections". The new NDP provincial Minister of Labour asked them, "Do you mean you just phoned the companies and asked them if they were obeying the law?" They said they did not have time for that. They just looked up the names of all the companies in the telephone book and transferred them to report forms.

That is the kind of farce that we will see again under people who continually call for smaller and smaller government and less and less regulation when it comes to the workplace. People who do that, whether it is by accident, design or ignorance, are guilty, Sir, of murder. They are guilty of murder, or at least manslaughter. Those of us who have gone through the excruciating pain of having to tell a woman that her husband was just murdered at the workplace by a regime which not only allows but encourages that neglect to take place do not have much patience with governments or politicians of any stripe who continue to allow that kind of ignorant action to take place.

We are now seeing the same thing again in the republic to the south of us, and the same things that used to prevail in British Columbia and is again happening under another government of a Conservative stripe calling itself Social Credit in