

*Government Orders*

ago, but several months back. There is an urgency when profits or the economy are affected—and I agree that there are workers and farmers who are hurt by that strike—and we have to take action. However, when it comes to the economic well-being of workers, their families, their salaries and their health, there is no urgency. This looks like a double standard to me.

You may remember that the Bloc Québécois tabled an anti-scab bill, back in 1990. The Liberals, who were then sitting on this side, supported that legislation. The Minister of Human Resources Development made passionate speeches, saying that the time had come to pass such legislation. Nothing has been done since. Yet, the government could have taken action, especially in light of the fact that the strike at Ogilvie's has been going on for more than 15 hours. But there is no urgency in that case.

However,—and I know that the federal Department of Labour is considering anti-scab legislation—documents from that department suggest that a majority vote of 60 per cent should apply. For the sake of democracy—and I know that a majority vote of 50 per cent plus one in the Quebec referendum is being challenged, but this is becoming a habit with the Liberals—when a strike vote is conducted under a collective agreement, it should also be subject to the 60 per cent rule. The same bill includes other provisions—even though we were told today that these were only ideas—but I wonder why these ideas are included in a departmental discussion paper.

That document was circulated so as to inform and consult both the employers and the unions, and that is fine. It obviously circulated, because we had it. So, in this document, the door is opened to having replacement workers who are not members of the bargaining unit on strike, but who could belong to a bargaining unit other than the one on strike but with the same company, or who could be non-unionized workers.

Seen one way, this is not anti-strikebreaker legislation, but rather legislation that, in fact, allows for strikebreakers. This is very different from legislation in Ontario, British Columbia or Quebec, which stipulates clearly that only managers, who were managers before the dispute began, may work. So, I hope that if indeed there is, at some point, an anti-strikebreaker bill here, that this notion of strikebreakers would not be made legal because management would be using people from the same company, but from another unit, or non-unionized workers as replacements for unionized workers.

This is nothing more than a legal façade to avoid facing reality. As the minister just told us she was ready to face reality, I imagine she will discover the subterfuge of certain of her deputy ministers, who are circulating documents, which do not in any way, shape or form, resolve the issue of the presence of strikebreakers. I think that anti-strikebreaking legislation would allow us to humanize our labour relations, a far cry from what is happening in certain American states, for example, where shots are fired during disputes, and also far removed from what once happened in Quebec and in other Canadian provinces.

• (1910)

I remember the Robin Hood strike, in 1977, or the postal workers' strike, where there was a lot of violence. At that time, scabs were even paid, with their hotel rooms and all, with federal funds. It was Canada Post that was paying their salaries, their food, and perhaps other things, I am not sure, but at least these things. And the Liberals, who were then in the official opposition, were denouncing that.

Since we are reviewing the Labour Code, I would also like to point this out. We are currently talking about a particular dispute, but it is part of a much greater issue. Hence the need to hold a commission of inquiry on labour relations practices in the port of Vancouver. But I know that this issue is only a part of a broader one which opens the door to a review of the code.

So, I hope that this will also open the door to giving Quebec female workers the same rights, whether they are under the federal code or the provincial code. I am alluding here to the preventative withdrawal of pregnant women. If you are a woman working in the communication or banking sector, depending on the federal system under which you work, you do not have the right to preventative withdrawal under the same conditions as a woman working in Quebec. When there were only eight members of the Bloc Québécois in the House, we had proposed such an amendment and the Liberals had supported it. So, I hope that they will remember that when they review the code in its entirety.

When we talk about this strike in Vancouver, we must also consider that there are other strikes going on. There is one in the railways and also one in the port of Montreal. It would be interesting if, before we resort to a special legislation to force employees back to work in the port of Montreal, we would choose the mediation process and name a mediator who would bring parties together, since they are already close to a settlement. They are negotiating in Montreal, not any more seriously than in Vancouver, but I think the chances of settling the dispute are better there than in Vancouver.

I have participated in long negotiations and I know that it is often better not to go into a useless mediation right at the beginning of a conflict and do nothing afterwards. But when you are close to a settlement, when you can see that only a few elements still need to be ironed out, mediation can be a very important tool. I hope that, in the case of the port of Montreal, the minister will choose this solution and not a special legislation.

In conclusion, I would like to announce that we will be voting against this bill at the second reading stage, because we feel it does not really allow for negotiations between the parties. I personally think that we are dealing with this situation very seriously, all the more so since we are working with the commission, and therefore I think we should be able to go into mediation without arbitration. First we should proceed only through mediation and let the parties negotiate and the mediator