

Labour Conditions

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): Order, please. I regret to interrupt the minister but the time allotted to him has expired.

Mr. Mackasey: The very fact that—

Some hon. Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): Order, please. There is no unanimous consent.

Mr. Fred McCain (Carleton-Charlotte): Madam Speaker, it is indeed a peculiar position in which the House finds itself tonight. We are debating a situation that was predictable from the time the legislation was presented to the House, and which is still predictable. There will be difficulty with it. Sometimes I wonder whether it was intended to work. Sometimes I doubt the credibility of the government that introduced it. I doubt it because it came in with three factors that basically relegated it to a position in which it could not succeed.

First, there were exceptions made by government ruling before the legislation was introduced. Secondly, it was put in a position where price control was second hand and labour control was first. That was bound to make it contentious. Thirdly, it endeavoured, and quite successfully so, to transfer a very major part of the responsibility for control to the provinces.

Since that time the government has proceeded to embarrass everybody it possibly could embarrass. The pattern has been consistent. The minister of health wants to cut his grants from the Government of Canada, and therefore the government is forcing the provinces into the position where they are withdrawing certain services in the health field. We read of provincial governments finding themselves in the position where they must close hospitals, in whole or in part. So it has been a very successful political ploy to transfer responsibility to others, and I submit it is questionable whether the government itself even thought the legislation could work without transferring responsibility for part of it to junior government at the provincial level. It is passing on responsibilities even at the municipal level so as to cut the cake as the government wants it cut. Certainly the legislation was designed to create dissension, and that dissension is apparent.

I was very interested in the remarks of the Postmaster General (Mr. Mackasey) as he was sort of pleading with this House and with Canada, and properly so, on behalf of the economic structure in which we find ourselves. We are in a position where inflation is eroding our stability. It is eating away at the very future of our country. So he had a right to plead on behalf of Canada. But I hope he was just as interested and sincere when he stated that, as a result of the remarks of the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Stanfield), there might be some reconsideration of the legislation, and an amendment introduced.

I think Canada will now expect from the Postmaster General, as a member of cabinet, a body of people that must be unanimous in its conclusions, some action to restore equity to the situation. Let us remember that these exceptions were made in order to bail out the Postmaster General from certain problems he inherited and with which he found himself forced to deal. Let us hope that

[Mr. Mackasey.]

part of his speech was as sincere as his pleading with all Canadians.

● (2310)

The hon. member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez) spoke in a fashion which indicated that we cannot understand in this House why he chose Canada as his eventual place of residence. It would make one wonder, if that place from whence he came was not satisfactory to him, why he thought he has been so endowed with wisdom he should now run this country. He fled from one, and is it his intention now to try to reduce this country to the level of that from which he fled?

Some hon. Members: Shame!

Mr. McCain: I did not make one interjection while the hon. member for Nickel Belt spoke—not one and he was a disgrace to the country of his adoption his host country.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McCain: If I and other members of this House can sit and listen to the things which would destroy us, then let that hon. member sit and listen while we review the statements he has made. Let us go to that great—

Mr. Gilbert: Attack the argument, not the personality. Deal with the argument.

An hon. Member: How about letting him speak?

Mr. McCain: Are you fellows done over there? Do you mind if somebody else has something to say, in peace and quiet, as did the hon. member for Nickel Belt as far as I am concerned, or are you running off at the mouth to the extent you can't control it?

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. McCain: The people of New Brunswick in the labour movement have exercised great responsibility for a great many years. I submit to you that they have shown they understand the economic problems of New Brunswick and the economic climate in which they work. They chose to work in New Brunswick as members of these unions. I want to thank the hon. member for Nickel Belt for the remarks he made in their support. They are well deserved, and he explained them well. I very much resent the fact that a union in New Brunswick or a New Brunswick corporation should become the victim of a rule when the government itself has already made exceptions for its own employees to solve its own problems. I do not think that is fair to the employer or the employee, and as a result of the exceptions that were made by the government we are now debating this subject tonight as a result of that, and nothing else. This was the exception of an old agreement and the exception of those agreements made before January 1, 1974. This has made a bone of contention throughout the entire structure.

For those great socialists on our left I want to cite the example of a meeting which was held not long ago which involved Canadian elected people as well as Swedish elected people. Among other things that were said, one of the Swedish representatives said if they did not have in