

Canada Labour (Standards) Code

would like to see governments take. I would like to see them study it, as ILO and other organizations do and as our Department of Labour does.

My information is that when the Minister of Labour took over this portfolio he called in most, if not all, people from the department who then tried to figure out how we could grant the maximum possible benefits to the workers for whom we are responsible. All kinds of ideas were produced and splendid legislation came before the House and, I am happy to say reached the committee stage. They came before the Standing Committee on Labour, Manpower and Immigration, where there seemed to be little controversy: the principle was accepted.

The Minister of Labour, through such legislation as the bill on unemployment insurance which is before us now, has taken an innovative approach. I was particularly impressed with the most recent legislation where he made provision for areas involving massive lay-offs and severance pay in a minimum standards bill, which would have been unheard of not too long ago.

I understand that in the Federal Republic of Germany—I assume it is the western section—the holiday legislation entitles workers over 35 to three extra days, and many collective agreements provide for further increases on the basis of age. In Luxembourg, workers over the age of 30 receive three extra days, and those over 38 six extra days.

So although the kind of legislation that I would like to see is not new, it could be new for Canada. As I said, I would not be the least bit surprised to see on the order paper very soon this kind of innovative legislation which is geared to helping the working man and to which I would lend my support. However, after the Department of Labour has made its study and brought in its recommendations for the length of annual vacation that is to be given and the qualifying period required—this must have taken a fair amount of study and probably much more research than I could have carried out—I would be interested to hear the recommendations made by departmental officials.

We must bear in mind that it is minimum standards at which we are looking, a guideline for employers, and anything we can do to prod the employer to help the working man would be to the good. No one would be opposed to that kind of approach.

Mr. Ray Perrault (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has demonstrated a rare perseverance in once more advancing this proposal to provide workers under federal jurisdiction with three weeks' annual vacation after three years. I know that there would be a great deal of support in Canada for this concept. In some parts of our country such a proposal may be economically viable. It is certainly in line with our concept of social justice.

As other speakers in the debate have pointed out, consideration is being given at present to further amendments to the Canada Labour (Standards) Code in so far as it calls for holidays with pay. I thought the hon. member made a very useful speech the other day when he spoke to us of his concern for and, happily, of his

[Mr. Cullen.]

general support for the amendments before Parliament now to the Canada Labour (Standards) Code. He made one observation which is to be found on page 5241 of *Hansard*, referring to the amendments to the Canada Labour (Standards) Code, which reads as follows:

We must also remember that once this legislation is on the books, it will not apply to all the workers of Canada. It will only apply to those who are in industries that come under federal labour jurisdiction. This represents about 10 per cent of the work force. Perhaps it is a little higher if the public servants who are brought in by regulation are included, but it is still a very small section of the labour force of this country.

I think he made a useful comment when he said:

For this to be universal, it would require constant agitation in all the provincial legislatures in order to get those bodies to bring in comparable legislation. It is quite true that it is in this place that a lead can be given. I hope the improvements that are before us tonight in this legislation will be noted by the legislatures of all the provinces and that they will make similar improvements.

Here is recognition by the hon. member that what we do here can give a lead to the country, particularly in the establishment of labour standards. We have seen this happen time and time again. A number of hon. members pointed out in an earlier debate the very beneficial effect that the establishment of a federal minimum wage in 1965 had on minimum wage standards from coast to coast in Canada. But the very fact that we create legislation here whose ultimate effect ranges totally beyond the workers under our federal jurisdiction means that we must bring to our development of such legislation an attitude of responsibility.

The other day we had a debate about the federal minimum wage which came under rather violent criticism from members of the socialist party. One hon. member said that \$1.75 an hour was a totally inadequate minimum wage and that we had not even attempted to bring the Canadian worker up to the poverty line, or words to that effect. Hon. members are fully aware that the Minister of Labour (Mr. Mackasey) would like to see a minimum wage very much higher than that, as would most members of the House, but we also know that in Canada as it exists today there is a diversity of economic problems. An unrealistically high minimum wage in one part of Canada might, if applied to another part of Canada, represent a realistic level. We know that if we peg the minimum wage at the level that most of us would support, this would create very great economic difficulties in some provinces. Apart from our own political difference here, we know this to be a fact.

● (4:40 p.m.)

The hon. member who is a former Premier of Saskatchewan knows that the Prairie provinces generally do not have as high wage levels as those which exist on the Pacific coast or in the province of Ontario. This is a fact that he had to live with as Premier of that great province. The other day, one of the Winnipeg hon. members became very self-righteous and alleged that \$1.75 an hour is totally insufficient as a federal minimum standard; yet the province of Manitoba, I note, has a minimum wage of only \$1.50. The same hon. member is critical of proposed