

[*Translation*]

Mr. Saint-Julien: Mr. Speaker, we all know that for years, many people, especially in Quebec, as I just explained, have known that Quebec is the only province that had what is called precautionary cessation of work. For years in our offices, especially since 1984 and particularly around 1989, women in banking, in some sectors of radio and communications and in transportation, in Canada and in Quebec, often in non-union positions, called us to ask what we could do to have the Canadian government put precautionary cessation of work in the Canada Labour Code. To answer the question of my Liberal colleague who has been involved in this issue since he came to this House, where he represents his constituency very well, we know that it has not been easy.

The Canadian government has had discussions with the unions on the Canada Labour Code. Today we know that several things can happen. Changes and amendments may be made, but it is mainly due to women in our ridings and women not represented by unions in banking and transportation.

Mr. Speaker, I want to tell you that if the minister goes to the legislative committee, he can elaborate on the subject since he participated in the negotiations on the labour code with the unions. I want to tell my colleague that we will follow this very closely and I thank him for his question.

• (1640)

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the member for Abitibi a question. I suppose that he realizes that the compensation received by a woman who uses the right to precautionary cessation of work will be different depending on whether she is covered by the provincial or the federal code. In Quebec, the only province to offer this provision, a woman worker receives about 95 per cent of her salary without deductions, which is about 100 per cent of the pay that she normally gets. This will not be the case under Bill C-101. So there will still be two kinds of citizens with respect to the right to precautionary cessation of work, those who come under the Quebec code and those under the federal code. I would like to ask him whether he does not think it would have been better to

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adopt the provisions of the Quebec code in full and thus not penalize a worker because she is pregnant or nursing a baby. That is my first question.

Second, I would also like to know from the member whether or not he believes that an anti-scab provision should have been in this reform of the Labour Code, given the very recent long lockout at Nationair, for example. The Quebec law has led to greatly improved labour relations in Quebec, partly because of the anti-scab bill passed there over 15 years ago, and neither the Quebec Liberals nor the employers' association, the Conseil du patronat, challenge it. I would like to have his comments on these two points.

Mr. Saint-Julien: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to see the Bloc Québécois member who was always absent when I tabled a motion in Parliament. I am pleased to see you hear this evening, sir.

When he talks about 95 per cent, I remember—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): On a point of order, the hon. member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie.

Mr. Duceppe: Mr. Speaker, I think that as the debate is beginning today and the hon. member is the fourth to speak in it, such remarks are somewhat ridiculous.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I must simply remind both sides of the House that it is contrary to parliamentary tradition and the Standing Orders to point out the absence or presence of an hon. member in this House.

The hon. member for Abitibi has the floor.

Mr. Saint-Julien: Mr. Speaker, you are a good chairman, but I only said that I was pleased to see him. I did not talk about absence or presence.

Mr. Speaker, the member just mentioned the 95 per cent. If I remember correctly, workers' compensation in Quebec was 90 per cent; that makes about \$353 a week, which is non-taxable for the recipients. We know that it cost employers in Quebec about \$78.4 million in 1990. I know that there are always things that can apply now. We know that the employee can be reassigned under two or three programs. All these things will be discussed in the legislative committee and I would really like to see the Bloc Québécois member on it if he can come and serve there.