

Labour Conditions

Mr. Knowles: The hon. member said last night he wanted to be up to date, that he did not want to talk about the past.

Mr. Munro: I am only going back to December 11, 1963, yet the hon. member is complaining. He should understand, then, how I feel when he goes back to 1919.

Mr. Knowles: I know how you feel.

Mr. Munro: I think it can properly be said that the standards contained in this bill come within the area of those which have been advocated by many organizations during the last few months. I assume that the submission of the Canadian Labour Congress as to the \$1.50 an hour will shortly be incorporated in some formal submission, probably as part of the next memorandum.

I would remind you, Mr. Speaker, that the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre was most complimentary with respect to action taken by the government to establish \$1.25 an hour as the minimum wage and I take it, therefore, that neither he nor the congress are too critical of the standards set by this legislation. In this regard I think the C.L.C. did issue a statement indicating support of the provisions of this bill only a few weeks ago. However, it did refer to the fact that the amount requested was recently increased from \$1.25 to \$1.50. I might also point out that unless I am badly misinformed the last private bill which dealt with this matter was the hon. member's own bill of February 20, 1964; I do not believe he has submitted a further private bill to provide for this increase. I might add that this bill was dated February 20, 1964, so I am only going back a few months—not to 1919.

Mr. Knowles: In view of the hon. member's desire to be up to date, does he not recall that during the debate on the bill he mentioned I pointed out that the C.L.C. had since recommended a minimum wage of \$1.50 and that I suggested that when the bill got into committee the alteration should be made accordingly? All I want from the hon. member is that he should be up to date.

Mr. Munro: I am only surprised the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre has not found time to put in the hopper a bill advocating this \$1.50.

Mr. Knowles: Are you challenging me?

Mr. Munro: Not necessarily. I think it can be said for all these reasons that this legislation commends itself as far as the standards are concerned. It is also in conformity with

[Mr. Munro.]

this party's own political commitments made at the time, which were in essence I believe the same as those of the New Democratic party prior to the last two general elections, namely \$1.25 minimum wage. For that reason there can be little question of the standards involved.

As I said earlier, and as I say again in conclusion, I hope this legislation will fall within the general design or area of governmental legislation which has been passed and is anticipated in the future. If this is regarded as a further step in an over-all program, and if we carry forward now and combine the various government agencies to fight unemployment and lift the income of the lowest income groups in the country—and this can best be done by combining all the government agencies—I say again that this would go a long way. I think the bill is also in keeping with the general design of the government in matters affecting training of the unemployed or making grants to industry for training people already employed in industry.

I say this because education, as has been emphasized, is a very important part of coping with poverty. I think it is in keeping with the governmental program regarding re-employment of—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I have to interrupt the hon. member because his time has expired.

Mr. Knowles: He is used to talking these bills out.

Mr. Erik Nielsen (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, I have one or two very brief observations to make with respect to this bill. I am not going to hold up the house in what I have to say more than a few minutes. As hon. members know I am always brief and to the point when I speak on matters of this nature. However, I cannot help observing that I listened for about ten minutes to the hon. member for Hamilton East (Mr. Munro) drawing this gloomy picture of poverty in Canada, a habit hon. members opposite acquired while on this side of the house, and yet I reflect on what the Minister of Finance (Mr. Gordon) had to say a week ago about Canadians never having had it so good. It seems to me that these two statements do not tie together very well. I was speaking to a chap the other day who said that he had not had a job since the Liberals came to power. He said to me that the Minister of Finance had said in the House of Commons that we had never had it so good in Canada, that