

Industrial Relations

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rea): The hon. member can mention the holidays referred to in the bill but he cannot mention others because they are not in the bill and we are discussing the bill.

Mr. Martel: I will abide by your ruling, Mr. Speaker.

(Translation):

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, I would just like to mention that the bill introduced by the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam is not very clear on that point, at least when it suggests that according to the definition in the explanatory note, which reads:

—any such employee is required to work on any statutory holiday, as defined in the bill, he shall receive pay for such work at double time in addition to his regular pay for such holiday.

We should always keep within the bounds of reason. Personally, I feel that double time is enough. Therefore, if the hon. member would amend his bill accordingly, it might perhaps receive general approval.

(Text):

Mr. Laurier Regnier (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I should like to congratulate the hon. member who introduced this bill. I think it is a very laudable one. I am in favour of as many holidays as it is possible to give to human beings who are the only animals who work. I think we should shorten the hours and increase holidays for everybody, including ourselves. There is only one danger about working less and getting double pay for our work. The fact is that in other countries in the world there are many more unemployed than we find in Canada and we might price our goods out of the markets of the world. I think a greater effort should be made in the United Nations to enforce a certain number of holidays in all countries of the world so that the working people of the world will be on an equal basis. Then we would not have to use tariffs to protect our home markets. If wages and working days were the same in all countries in the world we could trade freely and have much more prosperity.

I think the principle in the bill is already in force in Canada. I know that in Manitoba workers get double pay when they work on a statutory holiday and I believe they have all the holidays enumerated in the bill. I suppose there may be exceptions in some provinces such as the province of Quebec. They have twice the number of statutory

holidays that other provinces in Canada have and, as explained by the last speaker, the difficulty in that province is that the merchants will not comply with the provincial and municipal laws in that province. They insist on keeping their stores open. In fact, they have gone to the Supreme Court of Canada to dispute a local law on the matter.

Perhaps the federal government should pass a law to enforce all holidays in effect in the province of Quebec as well as those in effect under federal statute. In this way there will be more rest for the workers. With the machines we have now and with unemployment I think that the hours of work could be reduced so that people could enjoy the good things of life instead of being busy all the time working. As we say, it is existing, not living, if you have to work long hours every day. Of course, some people have to work on holidays. Mention was made of nurses and other hospital employees and probably it would involve too much to have them receive double pay on holidays. However, I do not think this legislation is intended to cover that situation.

As I said before, it is a difficult situation if one country has too many holidays when other countries have none or very few. Take countries like China, Japan, India or even Russia where people have to work 10 or 12 hours a day. In Russia women have to work sweeping the streets and really lead a life of slavery. It is too bad that communist doctrine, which is supposed to benefit human beings, results in the worst conditions in the world. They have made slaves of their women and other workers. I understand they have very few holidays and have even been deprived of the right to strike in order to try to benefit the lot of their own people. I think that might be one of the things that might be taken up at the next meeting with Khrushchev, an effort to improve the conditions of the working people of the world beginning with Russia so that we can live more peacefully and agreeably. I do not believe there is much more I can say on the matter and I again congratulate the mover of the motion.

Mr. Nicholas Mandziuk (Marquette): Mr. Speaker, I join with my colleagues in complimenting the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam (Mr. Regier) upon his introductory remarks. They were brief, clear and to the point. I only wish that in the little time at my disposal I could point out with the same