

It is time that we looked at some of these issues outside of partisan debate and considered whether we do not dehumanize ourselves by retaining certain principles that we think are virtually inalienable. Surely the right to live is also an inalienable right of those who are looking for some help, and the help that we are giving at best will only give many people in the world a chance for a meager existence.

We must look at the moral implications. Have we in fact doomed certain people to death because we did not have the moral courage to say that there are more important things than X number of dollars in a wage package? I am sure all members of the House have received letters from farmers and, surprisingly, not only from farmers but from businessmen, housewives and people who are simply fed-up with the tie-up in the country, whether one is talking about airlines, the post office or, as we are debating specifically tonight, the strike at the port of Vancouver.

What is happening with productivity? When is the last time that in a labour contract we have seriously considered productivity? What we think about is "what did the other guy get" and, "I want that, plus a little bit more". We talk about catching up. So long as we have inflation, can we seriously look at productivity? How are we to retain our competitiveness as a world trader on which a large part of our standard of living depends if increases are to take place, whether in the price of goods or labour management settlements, and if we do not relate some of these increases to productivity?

I think that with increased productivity labour has a right to demand something in return. That is a dimension of labour management that the government should consider. I simply ask, why do we not give more credence, more emphasis to the whole concept of productivity as it affects labour negotiations in this country in which we pride ourselves on the strength of its economy, its high standard of living, and the generous social services that the people of Canada are making possible through their tax dollars?

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How is it possible, with a population of 23 million people, that there is only one industrial country which had more man days lost through strikes than we did? Does that just mean that we are more greedy than anyone else, or does it show a fundamental problem in our society? With a population of 23 million, 9.2 million man days are lost, a 60 per cent increase over the year before. Is that a record of which the government is proud, and a record which its backbenchers want to talk about and support and defend? Surely that is a red flag to all members in this House that something is deeply wrong.

What about the right to strike? Most Canadians would argue that the right to strike is a basic human right whether it be in the private sector or the public sector. It is my opinion that it is time that the government, in consensus with the people of Canada, designate essential services. I believe that labour is not so blind and is not so tied up with its own labour packages that it could not participate in that process of deciding what are essential services. Once having decided that, the parties could come to an agreement that through a public disputes commis-

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sion—or whatever label they want; I am not tied to labels—we would use a method whereby when negotiations at the table break down the matter would be submitted to arbitration, or to a public disputes commission which would bring about a final settlement.

Negotiation is compromise, and in a democratic society we must have a larger measure of compromise if it is to exist. Surely in the right to strike and in the pressures of society today we do not see enough of that compromise.

I am glad that the settlement has taken place today, but does it take place finally because everything else breaks down and we say: okay, fine, let's settle? That is not compromise.

A question I have been wrestling with for some time now is not simply whether people in essential services have the right to strike but whether people have what I like to call the right to work, whether in the private sector or the public sector. Does the Canadian worker who does not want to join a labour union have the right also, if his union withdraws services, to continue working? If I want to accept the right to strike for myself, do I have the right to say to another fellow that even though he does not want to strike he must do so? Does he not have the right to work? Does he not have the right to contribute, or has unionism become so powerful and so all embracing that it can tell a worker that he cannot work, or if he does certain things will be done to convince him that he had better strike?

In Manitoba specifically with respect to essential services this question has been asked of me, and it bothers me that governments feel that while a person may have the right not to join a union, he still must pay union dues and cannot withdraw himself totally from a union. For example, let us say that he has a personal conviction that he does not want to be a union member. There is then a closed shop policy whereby, if he does not become a union member he cannot work.

There have been cases where a person was willing to give the amount of the union dues expected of him to charity. I am talking about public servants. Governments did not allow him to opt out, and I wonder if we have not gone too far on the other side of the ledger on the right to strike and not given enough thought to the man who says that he wants to work regardless of what his union will do.

I personally am convinced that direct strike action is more damaging than healthy. I am convinced that many of the packages that are signed after a period of strike will not enable the workers to recover the losses they sustained during the length of the strike. Perhaps the strike action is outdated in many cases today. Years ago labour had a legitimate moral position which often forced them to withdraw their services—they were struggling for pensions, better working hours and conditions, but is that the position today? Is it not sometimes that, as they accuse management of doing, they are going to get every penny then can, irrespective of their responsibility to society? I think it is incumbent upon government and Canadian society to look at the strike question very closely in order to be certain that we find interim solutions to our present situation in respect of grain handling.