

# PRICES GET THE AXE

IN DOWNTOWN GEORGETOWN

## Revisions to the Labor Code

By Ross Milne  
MP Peel-Dufferin-Simcoe

On December 13 the Minister of Labour, Hon. John Munro moved second reading of Bill C-8 which embodies amendments to the Canada Labour Code. In support of his own motion the Minister reviewed some of the economic indicators for the medium term, making what he called a "realistic analysis of the economic situation". What he had to say in this respect wasn't so far removed from what the Minister of Finance had said a few weeks before.

It was in the context of predictions of slow economic growth in the next few years that the Minister of Labour argued for measures to improve the labour relations system in Canada, as we know it. We cannot afford to revert, he said, to a situation marked by continual labour disruptions. We have reached the point where our individual and national expectations cannot be met without increases in productivity. And if, in this country, we continue to rely for our productive strength on the rather primitive notions of competition and conflict — everyone out for what he can get from the system — we shall soon lose ground to our trading partners, the more successful of whom are now emphasizing the more sophisticated values of collaboration and cooperation in the workplace.

The era of Controls, of course, has had a positive effect on our collective bargaining statistics. Over 70 per cent of negotiated settlements in the second year of controls. At the same time, the number of strikes in the last twelve months has declined by 63 per cent from strikes in the last twelve months in 1975 when Canada led the world in this category. But how much of this improvement is due to controls, and how much reflects a genuine change in attitude on the part of management and labour toward the collective bargaining process?

It's my belief that we cannot afford to slide back into the climate of labour relations which existed prior to the Anti-Inflation Board. For this reason, the Minister of Labour introduced a 14 point program about a year ago. Some points in the program were directed at improving the work environment itself; others were aimed at the structural defects in the collective bargaining system, as we have known it.

Not all of the points in the program can be achieved in legislation. The majority, in fact, depend on the establishment of consultative mechanisms through which labor, management and government can work towards a more co-operative system. Among those improvements which can be achieved through legislation are amendments to the Canada Labour Code now being proposed in Bill C-8 by Mr. Munro.

all benefits of the Code (except those related to hours of work) to managerial and professional employees, giving them some basic standards relating to vacations with pay and general holidays. Another amendment would prevent dismissal or lay-off because of pregnancy. And there are provisions to provide paid leave on compassionate grounds such as illness in the family. The Bill offers basic job protection during periods of sickness, protection against unjust firing with the right to appeal and similar protections for the unorganized worker which all organized workers have long ago negotiated in collective agreements and now take for granted.

Apart from these basic guarantees, the new amendments would require employers to pay all wages due employees on a regular and timely basis, and the Bill declares Boxing Day to be a statutory holiday for those under federal jurisdiction who this year, for the last time, will be required to work the day after Christmas without any additional benefits or pay.

Now, it would be wrong to exaggerate the impact of the new amendments to the Canada Labour Code. It must be kept in mind that the federal Code applies only to about 5 per cent of all paid workers in the Province of Ontario — mainly those who are employed by airlines, railways, crown corporation and interprovincial enterprises of one kind and another. Factory workers and those engaged in secondary industry would normally come under jurisdiction of the Ontario Labour Code, and would not be affected by the new amendments.

Clearly, therefore, the importance of the amendments lies not in the direct impact they will have, but rather in the example which they are intended to set for a new era of justice in the workplace and better industrial relations in Canada. For example, the amendments break new ground by adding to the federal Code a provision to enable the establishment of employer-employee safety and health committees at the worker level which will identify and ensure the correction of work hazards. And a further amendment allows a worker to withdraw from a work situation in which he is exposed to personal danger without fear of reprisal.

Aside from the provisions in the Bill intended to bring some measure of basic justice to apply to the employer-employee relationship, there are provisions aimed at improving the process of collective bargaining. Although the Government recognizes the worth of our collective bargaining system as the fairest and best system for settling industrial disputes, and although we stand committed to that system as a Government, there is no doubt in the minds of Canadians that the system could stand some improvement. After all, the nature of the system is adversarial and will remain so. In view of this if confrontation and labour disruptions are to be avoided, then there is a need for removal of some of the tensions — not only in the process of collective bargaining, but in its basic structure as well.

The amendments to address the process by improving the grievance arbitration system, increasing protection of the rights of the individual, reducing unnecessary delays, and — very important — providing for greater protection of the public interest in labour disputes. With respect to the structure of the collective bargaining system, the Bill empowers the Canada Labour Relations Board to institute coalitions for the purpose of industry-wide bargaining in some circumstances.

But the establishment of something like a collective bargaining information centre, gathering and dispensing reliable, impartial data for use at the negotiating table and manned by representatives of labour, management and government as equal partners would go a long way to facilitate settlements satisfactory to all parties. I would hope that this centre becomes operational soon.

In the end, the amendments introduced by Mr. Munro attempt to bring a measure of justice into the workplace for workers under federal jurisdiction, and they also address the problem of improving the collective bargaining system. But any real and lasting improvement in the structure of our labour relations system must await the establishment of mechanisms, for regular and meaningful consultations between labour, management and government, representing the public interest.

### Lion around

Colonel G.D. Dailley, President of African Lion Safari, the 500 acre drive-through wild life park near Rockton, Ontario announces that commencing on Monday, 26 December, 1977 the winter visiting public will be treated to an all new special display of Asian animals.

and black bears. This has become a favourite with the winter visitors and is now a permanent winter display, as are the buffalo, deer, and elk. The hardy Japanese snow monkeys will be on show in the walk-through Pets' Corner Lions in winter? Yes, the prides of lions, cheetah and hyena will be on show.



### COLOR TV WINNER

John Jacques of 206 Churchill Road in Acton is the latest winner in downtown Georgetown's promotional contest. Mr. Jacques won a color television. Presenting the prize is left, Joe Hafstode of Wigo and right, Peter Pomeroy of North Hallow Sports.

## Now it's utter exhaustion

By SUSAN DE FACENDIS

Hey! Is there anyone out there? From the pail of silence that hangs over our street at this mid-way point between Christmas and the New Year, I can only assume everyone is as spaced out as I am.

The mad rush of Christmas is over - the preparations for a great night on the town have not yet begun. We, as usual are feeling the effects of over-indulgence in all the good things: too much food, too much giving and receiving and too much laughter. Now - barring the left-over exhaustion - it's over.

It just does not seem possible that we are once again facing the arrival of yet another year and, from all the visible signs of life around our house, I do not think anyone much cares.

Where did 1977 go? - and how do you analyse whether a year set in such a fast moving time frame was good, bad or indifferent?

I seem to vaguely remember planting my spring vegetable garden; I have distant memories of a brief summer cottage vacation where the fish eluded me as decisively as ever and, more recently, a pre-Christmas postal strike that almost was.

Once again it is the time when I find myself lackadaisically deciding upon the ultimate disposal of a dismal looking turkey

carcass; spending odd desultory hours picking pine needles out of the shag carpeting (a little job that will take until at least August) and attempting a half-hearted clean-up of wrapping paper, gift tags and scotch tape, while stepping carefully over and around the outstretched, seemingly wall-to-wall, bodies of a holiday battle-fatigued husband and vari-sized children.

Somehow, I think I have been through all this before.

There comes a moment however, when thoughts of the coming new year will eventually penetrate even my dull, post-Christmas brain. If one wishes to wax poetic, here is a new beginning being handed to us, another inevitable page in the book of time to be turned, and what can I as an individual do to make it a better one?

My initial, unworthy response to that much too heavy a question on a day such as this, is the desire to simply give in to the overwhelming urge to crawl back into bed, pull a pillow over my head and leave the family to deal with the turkey ribcage as best they may.

I have no way of knowing what 1978 has in store, nobody can. I only know that somewhere under the dirty snow beyond my doorstep lies a welcome, hidden spring season; that behind all those closed and

curtained windows lining the street, are good people whose lives and activities are geared towards making their particular corners of the world a better place.

I know in the coming year I will write off major concerns as being beyond my scope and continue to haphazardly jog from day to day through the usual routine jobs, forever trying to become organized and destined to lose on all fronts. I know my children will outgrow another two seasons worth of clothing in the year ahead. Louisa will probably discover lipstick and Richard will need a razor. I can certainly predict that Teresa will remain my baby for another year and that my husband will go on a diet after dinner for the next 365 nights.

I have just glanced again at the inert, prone bodies of my family (that not even a prod of the foot can arouse) still littering the livingroom floor and chesterfield.

"Hey family! Don't you know a new year is coming?"

"Oh mother!" - "Snore" - "Grasp" - "Grun."

Well, if you can't beat 'em, join 'em - let the young 1978 take care of itself. 1977 and I, as befits our advanced ages, are going to fade into the sunset together with a pillow over our heads.

See you next year.



### WHY CHRISTMAS?

Members of the Knox Church, Georgetown, Young People, held a dramatization Christmas Eve of Why Christmas? The four act play was held prior to the Christmas Eve Service.

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