

*Industrial Relations*

of the question of union security, the admittance that the trade union movement, the collective bargaining process, is a legitimate thing in a democratic society. That is at the crux of the argument which has been advanced by the trade union movement of this country, that the question of the existence of unions, of the security of unions, should be taken outside of the field of collective bargaining as such.

If you take the line of reasoning which has been put forward by the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour, then you are starting on the first step of a logical line of reasoning which admits that in fact the trade union movement, the collective bargaining process, is not a legitimate thing in this country. That is the important thing to realize. And more than that, Mr. Speaker, as members of this house, as citizens of this country, we should have come to the point where we are prepared to recognize that the proper role of legislation is to narrow down the field of the disputes that arise from time to time between management and labour to what is the real question involved in collective bargaining, namely, the improvement of working conditions, matters of hours of work and the remuneration which workers are to receive for their work, and that if labour legislation as such has any legitimate place at all on the statute books of this country that is one of the most important functions it can perform.

No one in this country likes to see disputes between management and labour reach the point where such things as strikes and lockouts and all that go with them become involved. No one who has been through a strike, no one who has had some responsibility as an officer of a union in conducting a strike, has any illusions whatsoever about the unfortunate results of labour being forced to take that action. It is something that can be measured to a degree in the loss of pay cheques that ensues. It is something that can be measured by the loss of valuable industrial production. Measured by any one of those terms by which one can assess the effects and the implications of strikes and lockouts, it is an unfortunate and undesirable situation to have arise. It seems to me that no hon. member of this house who is interested in the welfare of the working people of Canada, in the growth of our country, in the increase of the real wealth which we as citizens may be able to enjoy in our proper share, should for a moment hesitate to endorse a measure which will in some degree at least remove the possibility of the advent of such things as strikes and lockouts.

Without legislation which grants union security as a right to the trade union movement, the organized working people of Canada, you leave within the bargaining process and within the area of possible dispute the question of the very existence of the union as such and the right of the workers to bargain collectively. That, Mr. Speaker, is the real argument in favour of the adoption of this type of legislation in Canada. By its adoption you have put the collective bargaining process in its proper role. You have taken out of the area of dispute the question of the right of the workers to organize and bargain collectively.

This legislation proposes to introduce into our federal labour law the principle which, as the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) indicated when he introduced this bill, has been adopted in the legislatures of six of the ten provinces in this country up to the present time and which is in the process of coming into being in at least one of the other Canadian provinces.

It is all very well to argue that most of the working people in this country who come within the purview of federal labour legislation already have written into their contracts the provisions that are suggested here, or something better, but nevertheless that makes it all the more apparent that the time is long overdue when this should be a part of the Industrial Relations and Disputes Investigation Act.

When a principle has become as well established as this has through the long and bitter process of collective bargaining, why should this parliament hesitate any longer to put this into the form of legislation so that the process need no longer be continued for the minority of those who may not enjoy it as a right? As long as the parliament of Canada refuses to recognize that this sort of thing is a right of the workers of Canada, then just so long are we giving tacit recognition to the fact that employers who come within the field of federal labour legislation have the right to go out on union busting tactics and that in fact, as well as in law, the workers have not really the right of collective bargaining.

Mr. Speaker, I would suggest respectfully through you to the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour that if he is going to get up in this house and argue against the adoption of this measure he is going to have to produce something much better than these quotations taken out of context from certain people, all of whom would be prepared to stand up in this house and advocate the adoption of this legislation.