

Canada Labour Code

could be streamlined to the point that it is streamlined in other parts of the world where we have that kind of autocratic and demagogic system. Members opposite agree that everyone would benefit from the achievements the government thinks it is producing for our country. The union argues that everyone who shares in the benefits should contribute. Therefore, it would be a logical argument that everyone should join the Liberal party. Even my friends across the aisle would not agree with that ill-conceived logic.

If we examine the union movement in Great Britain we can observe the virtual destruction of an economy by self-centered unions. Rule by trade union bureaucrats, who necessarily think in terms of their members only, has crippled the economy of the United Kingdom, with disastrous effects for the ordinary citizen, the unorganized. Today in Canada the union movement involves about one third of the labour force, but demands, and receives two thirds of the gross national product which is labour's share. The concern of all of us in this House has to be for the other two thirds.

The other two thirds, who contribute most to our economy and the development of this country, work for companies that are not oligopolies or monopolies. They work for the small businessmen. That sector of our economy does not have the same power as the larger corporations which are trying to compete with the government in the power play in this country.

We are concerned that this kind of system should exist where two thirds of the economy, two thirds of the enterprise system, is not unionized; two thirds of business, and two thirds of labour. We are establishing a situation where we sit down with one third of the labour force, one third of the business community, and share with them the power given to us by all Canadians. This can only mean that the unorganized worker is left out in the cold, much like the small elite businessman who faces a giant corporation; only the scraps are left for the most vital elements of the economy.

The European community have managed to solve many of their labour problems by combining the union leaders and business directors together under a neutral chairman, on the board of directors. It is not a bargaining process but a joint decision-making process. The worker has an insight into internal operations, something which is almost totally absent in our system. This also ensures that unions do not take more out of the economy than the economy can reasonably provide. In these times of high inflation it is important that we instill a similar spirit of co-operation, not confrontation, into our own industrial process. The Minister of Labour (Mr. Munro) and the government know that.

I greeted with a certain degree of enthusiasm the announcement by the Minister of Labour that \$10 million would be taken out of the taxpayer's purse to provide unions with the means of training their representatives to take part in this co-operative spirit. I wonder if an equal amount of money will be set aside for the small businessman. He too will have to play a more active role if we are to succeed in the objectives we have set for ourselves.

[Mr. Oberle.]

Workers in most unions in Canada are not only compelled to be members but also to support a political party. This is the crux of the whole system. The political party that is supported may not meet individual approval, but nonetheless it receives funds from the union for election campaigns. Of course it is no secret that the party which is supported by the unions is not the Liberal party, but the NDP. This is not only very dangerous but is extremely undemocratic. One of the cardinal principles of democracy is the freedom of association. In my opinion, unions deny that privilege. Looking again at the European labour model, it is illegal for unions to involve themselves in the political process in that way.

● (1610)

Instead of compulsory membership in any one union we must ensure that every Canadian worker has voluntary access to a union. That is the crux of the whole thing. Every Canadian worker needs to be unionized in some way, but he does not need to be compelled; he needs voluntary access. Right to work legislation in the United States has actually increased union membership. Every study I have made of the various states which have adopted legislation of this kind shows that union memberships have increased. It does not infringe upon the democratic process. Rather, it substantiates it. There is evidence to indicate that union members themselves support such measures and often feel that leaders of the unions do not express the true desire of the rank and file.

A high percentage of Vancouver area residents, for example, including over half of the trade union members interviewed in a survey carried out by Sterling Press, favoured the introduction of right to work legislation in British Columbia, a province where unions are firmly entrenched. Over 79 per cent of those expressing an opinion favoured this sort of legislation.

In another survey, carried out in Saskatchewan by the Public Relations and Communications Associates of Regina for the Employers Association of Saskatchewan, it was shown that almost 80 per cent of the union members polled felt too much power was concentrated in the hands of their labour leaders and of big unions in Canada.

What I would like to see established in Canada, Mr. Speaker, is a voluntary union structure whereby all Canadians would have potential access to union membership. Of those polled in Regina, 69 per cent felt that a man or woman should be able to hold a job whether or not they belonged to a union. This is only equitable. Our society has been built on a system of co-operation.

A former NDP labour minister in British Columbia, Mr. King, used to describe B.C. workers as little capitalists, determined to maximize their profits through wages. This is not an appropriate analogy because the capitalist does not maximize his profit at the risk of endangering the health and vigour of his enterprise. He uses profits to expand and modernize his facilities. Selfish union demands have led to high wages in British Columbia and have cost the province much of its edge in international trade. I may add it has had the same effect on trade within our country as well. Our labour costs now run