

Industrial Relations

Mrs. Ann Shipley (Timiskaming): Mr. Speaker, unfortunately I am very hoarse today and I hope you will bear with me. My remarks will therefore of necessity be brief.

I listened with great interest to the hon. member for Comox-Alberni (Mr. Barnett) in criticizing the argument presented by the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Labour and I must say I could not follow his line of reasoning at all. The hon. member stated that the lack of voluntary revocable check-off denied free collective bargaining to the labour force in Canada. With all due deference to the hon. member I say that is a completely wrong statement because we now have free collective bargaining in Canada without any compulsory—revocable or otherwise—check-off. He also had something to say to the effect that if we had this legislation on the books it would prevent strikes. I may be wrong, but to the best of my knowledge it has been a long time since there has been a strike over this particular measure alone. I do not suggest it might not have been one of the bargaining points but I do not recall it as having been the principal one for some time.

The hon. member claims that we should pass this legislation to guarantee security to the unions. Well, there is just a little more to this measure than that. If we pass it we are compelling employers to guarantee their security willy-nilly regardless of the responsibility shown by the particular union concerned. Now, I have no objection to the check-off as such provided it has been accorded or won by the body of workmen because they have shown responsibility in their organization and as a group of employees, and that is the way we have it in Canada.

Mr. Barnett: May I ask the hon. member a question?

Mrs. Shipley: Surely.

Mr. Barnett: I wonder if the hon. member could make just a little more clear to us, when she talks about showing responsibility, to whom she means the responsibility should be shown. Does she mean responsibility to the employer or does she mean the responsibility of a union to its own members?

Mrs. Shipley: I mean both, Mr. Speaker. I mean the responsibility to the community and the responsibility of the union to its members as part of the industry in which they are employed. In other words, there are some unions which have proven themselves by the actions of their leaders and some of their members to be very irresponsible citizens indeed. Now, mark me, I am not suggesting for a moment this is common

[Mr. Barnett.]

to all unions. The majority of union bodies are fine bodies; but I see no reason why we should compel an employer to recognize a group that is not responsible nor indeed do I see any reason why we should put compulsion on the employer in any event. Compulsion is abhorrent to most Canadians. We have good free bargaining and negotiation laws in Canada and I feel that is the way this should be done.

I have forgotten the United States figures and indeed I do not have the most recent ones, but I put the last official figures on *Hansard* two sessions ago, I think. In the United States they had voluntary check-off as a compulsory measure in many states and in several of them they have taken that legislation off the books because they found it did not work in practice. It invariably leads to the closed shop, which I do not think is desired by many Canadians. That has been its history in the United States. Furthermore, in the cradle, shall we say, of the labour movement in Great Britain they have no check-off and they must have exceedingly good reasons for not having such a measure. We as a party are not against the check-off. The majority of the employees under our jurisdiction have the check-off and others are free to negotiate for it.

I understand that in the representations made to the government by various labour unions, while this point may have been mentioned in their briefs it was not one of the major points they brought up. In other words, it is my belief that the unions are not pressing strenuously for this measure at the present time and it is to my certain knowledge that a large number of men who are union members do not want it because under certain circumstances it is neither voluntary nor revocable. That is why I believe it should be obtained through bargaining negotiations.

Mr. C. E. Johnston (Bow River): Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to take very long discussing this bill because I have expressed my opinion regarding it on numerous occasions. When the hon. member who has just resumed her seat speaks of irresponsible unions she must remember that this is applicable only to certified unions. Further, when she says that this would compel the employer to guarantee the union, I doubt if that is quite as accurate as it might be because the bill states specifically it is a voluntary and revocable check-off.

That means, first, that it must be voluntary on the part of the worker. The worker gives his consent in writing to have the deduction made. That is a common practice in more than one industry in this country. In the second place, if the worker desires he can