

comparatively recent years that labour had distinct representation in the House of Commons in Great Britain. Then certain more liberal or progressive laws were brought into force. Even the criminal code began to be altered not only because of the pressure of labour members in the House of Commons but because of enfranchised labour people throughout the country.

We in Canada have inherited to a very considerable extent the laws of Great Britain, many of them drawn up years and years ago, and our Canadian laws in many respects are those of Great Britain in the days before they had been modified, as they have been in England, under pressure of the growing labour forces. In Canada labour has had comparatively little political power, or, for that matter, economic power; otherwise we might have had more political power.

I would suggest that the laws on our statute books to-day are largely laws based upon an outgrown type of industry. In the old days there was the individual employer on one side and on the other the individual employee. As I illustrated the other evening, we sometimes still see the old arrangement in a simple shoemaker's shop—the employer on one side of the bench and the employee on the other side. Practically the two men are of equal bargaining power. But in the typical workshop to-day, behind the employer or the manager, stands a strong corporation, possibly a great group of corporations. What chance has the individual workman in bargaining with a corporation financed by millions? The situation is an impossible one. This condition made necessary the formation of trade unions. Originally, these were regarded as illegal in that they interfered with freedom of trade. To-day, however, trade unions are recognized; they are no longer illegal. But legislation has not gone so far as to make it possible for men to join trade unions without being discriminated against or dismissed.

Let me point out that to-day property is well protected, as it has always been. It is illegal for a man to break a piece of machinery, but there is no law against an employer dismissing a man or taking other action that might lead to the breaking up of a home. I hope the Minister of Justice can see the close parallel that prevails there. A man can be dismissed and his dismissal may mean that he is permanently out of a job. It may be that he has no other economic resources and that may easily involve the breaking up of his home. There is absolutely nothing to protect the workman in these cases. But let a man injure in the slightest way a piece of machinery and immediately he is

hailed before the courts. He is guilty. There is no equal protection. There is one law distinctly for the employer in the protection of his property and an altogether different law or no law when it comes to the protection of the worker in his job, which often is the only thing he has.

I urge that whoever controls a man's job under modern conditions controls his very life. I wonder whether those of us who work in this comfortable house, in these comfortable surroundings, for some months on end quite realize what it is to be out of a job and without the chance of getting another. Under modern conditions, the man who controls my job controls my very life, yet it would appear, according to our laws, that a man has no rights whatever to his job. He may be dismissed in the most arbitrary manner.

Mr. LAPOINTE (Quebec East): Would you make it criminal for your electors to take away your job?

Mr. WOODSWORTH: No; that is another matter. I would make it criminal for them to take it away by some of the means used to-day, that is, bribery and intimidation; and that is what I want to prevent in this case.

To get back to this bill, I would suggest that organized employers to-day, incorporated and so on, are many of them denying to employees the rights which they themselves claim. Employers come here for charters, receive incorporation which gives them great power which they often exercise arbitrarily and without regard to the welfare of the employees. They are well protected; all this bill is designed to accomplish is that the employees, the labour people, are also protected. It is a different type of protection they need, but it is protection just the same, and protection which ought to be given.

I would make my appeal for the passage of this measure really on two grounds: first, there is the inherent right of freedom, freedom of speech, freedom of the press and freedom of organization.

Mr. BENNETT: Of association.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: Of association, if you will. We who come of British stock and have been nurtured in British traditions have always thought that Britishers ought to enjoy that freedom, but in practice we are very far from enjoying it. It is not sufficient to have what is called political freedom, the right to vote. It is not sufficient to have the right to travel up and down the king's highway. In order to enjoy complete freedom a man must have economic freedom. There is no use in saying, "I have the right to travel on the