

clearly that I support the efforts made to improve the process of collective bargaining. I accept the principle of free collective bargaining in carrying on labour-management relations. In my own constituency of Regina East there exist many collective bargaining agreements, some of which come under the jurisdiction of the federal Department of Labour and others under the jurisdiction of the department of labour of the province of Saskatchewan.

There has been a long history of peaceful and amicable relationships between employers and employees in Saskatchewan and negotiations have been carried on in good faith. It seems to me we must assure a greater degree of acceptance by the public of the principles stated in this preamble, by employers, members of trade unions and other workers. Certainly members of trade unions accept this principle, but we need greater acceptance by some employers.

As I indicated previously, many employers do not accept these principles and do not operate on the basis of good faith. If we are to experience an improvement in industrial relations in Canada we must move in the direction suggested by this bill. Surely the proposals and questions I have raised should receive consideration by the minister. I hope they will lead to further improvement in the legislation, resulting in a better labour code for Canada.

**Mr. Charles H. Thomas (Moncton):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to speak briefly of the proposed amendment. When Bill C-183 first made its appearance as the successor of Bill C-253, one of the most noticeable differences was that the new bill contained a preamble not found in the original bill. I immediately asked myself why there was this departure from normal procedure and what was the purpose of the preamble. After reading the preamble I still could not find a valid reason; I could not understand any purpose to be accomplished by the preamble. It began to become self-evident that the only reason for its inclusion was as a half-hearted response to the recommendations of the Woods task force that the government make some definite commitment on the side of the collective bargaining system.

• (1640)

It is interesting to note that the Woods Report certainly gives half-hearted endorsement to the bargaining process. The report stated, in effect, that while the present system has many limitations and shortcomings, it is necessary and the best thing available at the present time. In an interesting aside, however, the report indicated that the present system has already tended to complicate the attainment of some of the country's goals. I believe it is obvious that what the task force was referring to was that, even though there is a general acceptance that the collective bargaining process is good and probably the best system so far designed, there is a growing disenchantment with the process as used by management, labour and government. The fact is there is an increasing feeling in the country that what should probably be of primary concern, the public interest, is being completely overlooked in the collective bargaining process as we see it practised today.

#### *Canada Labour Code*

Previous speakers have referred to the delinquencies of bargaining agencies of the government, and the fact that many accusations have been hurled at the Treasury Board about their lack of good faith in bargaining. It seems to me, from the little I know of collective bargaining, that it breaks down completely unless there is good faith on the part of the parties involved. I would think, therefore, if the preamble was intended to strengthen the collective bargaining process there should have been something in the preamble or the bill itself to achieve this purpose. In reading through the many briefs the one which struck me particularly was that presented by Bell Canada. I thought the statement on the preamble was very good. I should like to read it into the record:

I find the preamble excessively positive when it proclaims the universal acceptance of freedom of association and free collective bargaining as the—

The word "the" is underlined.

—basis of industrial relations for the determination of good working conditions and sound labour-management relations. While this company and its employees are committed to collective bargaining, a very substantial portion of the work force is not so committed, and the public is becoming increasingly disenchanted with the impact of widespread strikes. I believe Canada's best interests would be better served if all concerned parties concentrated on improving an imperfect system rather than extending its scope.

• (1650)

One of the things that disturbed me and other members of the committee as we listened to the various presentations was that it became very evident that there is a growing distrust between labour and management. I felt we had been making considerable progress in the mechanics of labour-management relations and it was very upsetting to discover that the old cat-and-mouse game was still being played. Labour did not trust management, and vice versa.

The employers felt that the provisions in the bill regarding technical change were tough and would tend to handicap management in negotiations with employees. On the other hand, employees said these provisions should be tougher. In effect they said, "We don't trust the employer. He will not operate with the interests of his employees at heart." Therefore, it seems to me that if this preamble is to be of any use it must have something in it that will improve the present system of bargaining. The preamble presently refers to the act but it sets out something that really is not in the act. The last paragraph of the preamble reads:

And Whereas the Parliament of Canada desires to continue and extend its support to labour and management in their co-operative efforts to develop good relations and constructive collective bargaining practices, and deems the development of good industrial relations to be in the best interests of Canada in ensuring a just share of the fruits of progress to all—

Then we go into the body of the bill. To me that paragraph would imply that this legislation is introducing something new to improve the collective bargaining process, and that that process should be sustained as the best method of settling disputes. But many of the people who appeared before the committee took the opposite viewpoint. They said that this bill, instead of improving relations between the two parties, would tend to worsen them. I have mentioned a couple of the provisions to which they