

Canada Labour Code

hon. friends suggests there should have been consultation before this donation was made. How many of the shareholders of Union Carbide were asked whether they wanted to assist in the election of the hon. member for York North? I would be interested to hear the hon. member tell us what kind of consultation took place with respect to that particular donation. The same applies to the \$300 from the Ontario Arms Collectors Club. It would be interesting to learn how the hon. member voted with respect to certain legislation which affects the Ontario Arms Collectors Club. What sort of consultation took place with regard to the \$20,000 received from various corporations involved in the building industry in his own riding.

We see here yet another example of the duplicity of the Conservative party. They suggest that somehow there is something wrong with working people deciding democratically to donate funds and labour to the party they have decided best represents their interests while on the other hand remaining completely silent about corporate donations going to their own party on a massive scale and on an involuntary basis.

Again, I would draw attention to the fact that in 1978 the Conservative party received from corporations some \$2.67 million. That was in the most recent year for which figures are available. We are told the Liberal party did not receive very much, really, from the corporate sector—that they receive a lot of money from individuals. That certainly is not the case, Mr. Speaker. The Liberal party received \$2,500,000 from the corporate sector and \$2.1 million from the private sector. So it was a case of Tweedledum and Tweedledee. Both are in the pockets of the corporate sector and neither should be coming before the House suggesting that the union movement which democratically gives certain moneys to candidates in the New Democratic Party should in any way be criticized. Such decisions are made freely and openly and democratically and they are made by the trade unions with which I and members of my party are proud to be associated.

Mr. Ron Irwin (Sault Ste. Marie): Mr. Speaker, with your permission I should like to direct some remarks about the bill now before the House. I represent a riding where the major union supports a political party financially. Even though I may not like this and even though I may speak against it, as is my right, it is the democratic right of that union to decide its own affairs, and as a member of Parliament I must protect that right. Parliament has no business making that activity illegal.

It was with a sense of amazement that I listened to the hon. member for Burnaby (Mr. Robinson). He says it is okay for a union member who presumably has the right to vote in a free society privately, to go down to the union office, because that is where he has to go, and sign a paper saying he declines to support a particular political party. Mr. Speaker, if you believe in a principle you believe in the whole principle, not just half a principle because it happens to help an hon. member's party politically.

● (1750)

As hon. members of this House are well aware, industrial relations in Canada have in recent years become a topic of prime concern and interest to Canadians in all walks of life. Today nobody is untouched by the workings and breakdowns of a country's industrial relations system. As the hon. member for Welland (Mr. Parent) said earlier, all countries have been affected by the worldwide problems of inflation and other associated economic and social upheavals. However, Canada has also had to come to grips with factors which have conspired to challenge the industrial relations system and to challenge the leadership and flexibility of those government departments responsible for the conduct of labour affairs.

Labour Canada is, of course, the federal department responsible for developing and administering the framework in which labour affairs are conducted within the federal jurisdiction. The legislation which Labour Canada administers consists principally of the Canada Labour Code, which is the product of some 80 years of trial and error.

While success may be a difficult quality to measure in the world of labour affairs, I think it only fair and accurate to say that the present legislation is generally successful, appropriate and effective in an area noted for its volatility and for its capacity to threaten the success of the country's socioeconomic operations. We should therefore not arbitrarily introduce off-the-cuff changes to this legislation which involves such a delicate balance between the legitimate rights and duties of labour and management and the protection of the broader public interest.

If the hon. member who introduced this bill is so concerned, he should be prepared to propose a similar bill which affects corporations. He said today that shareholders can say something at annual meetings, but for how long is that remembered after elections? If he is prepared to use a shotgun against unions, he should be prepared at least to use a BB gun against corporations.

As I have indicated, our labour legislation has not been developed overnight. It is the product of a vast amount of deliberation, common sense, expertise and good will on the part of innumerable Canadians. Each of its provisions which has been developed over these 80-odd years has been developed with painstaking care and much debate by legislators, union leaders, industrial relations professionals, constitutional experts and a host of others.

What I am saying is that neither the legislation itself nor the institutions of labour and management are about to benefit by any ad hoc amendments such as that proposed in Bill C-203. As a matter of fact, the bill is so anti-labour I am surprised the hon. member placed it before this House. In the case before us today there appears to be no real cause for the proposal.

This proposal would amend part V of the Code by the insertion of the following words after section 162, and I quote:

Any provision in a collective agreement requiring an employer to make a deduction from the remuneration paid to an employee and to credit the deduction to a trade union, is invalid if any part thereof is, or is intended, to be