

This is what I want to call attention to:

Mr. Woodsworth: There was on the statute books a law which prevented corporations from contributing to campaign funds. We all know that this law was very largely a dead letter; it had never amounted to very much.

He is apparently an authority on it.

But that legislation had the effect of prohibiting labour unions from contributing to campaign funds. We had tried our best to introduce an amendment to exempt labour unions from this clause as they contributed openly. That amendment was turned down on one or two occasions, but last year on the third reading, when there was no opportunity to go into the matter in detail, I introduced an amendment removing that particular clause from the criminal code, and the house accepted the amendment. I will not discuss the question whether, in view of the present situation that was a good thing or not; but I do know that campaign funds came from corporations long before that amendment was adopted.

Mr. Chaplin: It was not in the criminal code but in the election act.

Mr. Woodsworth: I accept the correction; it was in the election act.

Mr. Hanson (York-Sunbury): You weakened the law.

Mr. Woodsworth: Possibly.

This is the new breed of reformers we have to-day, and they are actually trying to justify themselves for taking away the prohibition to corporations, giving campaign funds, opening up the door in order to make it lawful and proper to receive contributions. The hon. member (Mr. Woodsworth) admits on the previous page that he received a contribution himself from the central committee. The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre said they got only \$100 from the central labour committee. Well, it is very much like saying, "Don't do as I do but do as I tell you."

Let us see whether I have put a proper interpretation on the conduct of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre. His excuse was that he moved to have that prohibition discontinued and removed from the statutes because it was not carried out, because the law was broken. I wonder how many laws would be left on the statute books if all those that were broken were abolished. The law against stealing would certainly be soon rescinded; the law against murder would only have had time to dry on the books before it would have had to be removed, according to the principle laid down by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre. I say therefore that the excuse he gave was no justification for the removal of this particular law, because that principle carried to its logical conclusion would leave destitute the shelves that contain the statute books of the country, because the laws are all broken as far as I know.

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Mr. WOODSWORTH: May I suggest that penalties are attached to most laws.

Mr. MOTHERWELL: All right, that will be taken care of; the electors will prescribe some of the penalties probably. For fear I am too severe in my interpretation of what my good friend from Winnipeg North Centre has done with respect to this matter, let me say I do not attach all the blame to him. He took the initiative in passing that legislation. But he was not satisfied with having been turned down twice by the government of that day, for in the face of an agreement not to bring the matter up a third time—according to a statement made by the then solicitor general, it was agreed not to bring it up in the house—the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre did bring it up in committee of the whole and did prevail upon the house to accept his amendment to the Election Act. That is why to-day campaign funds may be made legally and properly; it is because of the initiative he took on that occasion in that direction. The parliament of Canada of course must all be held responsible. Had the hon. member not however taken the initiative, that law I believe would not have been changed as it was changed on that occasion. I hold the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre more responsible than any other hon. member in this house for having made legal and proper campaign funds donated by corporations. How will I support this view? I would like in support of my contention on this subject, to direct the attention of the house to some remarks made by the Prime Minister in 1931 and on the following day when speaking on the same subject. I desire to take this opportunity of thanking the Prime Minister for his candor on that occasion. The Prime Minister is reported on page 4409 of Hansard of 1931 as follows:

The law as amended at the last session permitted corporations to make contributions, and that amendment was made at the instance of the gentleman from Winnipeg who has spoken to-day.

The only member from Winnipeg who spoke that day was the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre. The Prime Minister continued:

That is the position. Contributions were made legal and proper, but in preceding elections that was not so.

The Prime Minister then went on to discuss another matter with which I will not deal. According to my interpretation of those remarks, the conduct of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre as I have just described it was supported in toto by the Prime