

*Canada Labour Code Amendment*

could take a withdrawal, because I want to participate as much as I possibly can in one of the most democratic organizations anywhere in the world.

When the hon. member speaks of lack of democracy and shows contempt for anyone who suggests comparing the trade union movement with this House, it becomes obvious that he has never participated in the affairs of any union, or he could not possibly have made those statements. My union, the International Woodworkers of America, is an international union. He decried the fact that we had international unions, but I did not hear him mention once that the parent body of just about every employer with which the international union deals in British Columbia is located in the United States. They are all U.S. companies, and if anyone suggests to me that we should not be working together, on both sides of the border, against these monstrous employers, then I say he does not know what he is talking about.

Let me tell the hon. member, since he wants to talk about democracy, that in the IWA, as in nearly every union, officers are elected by secret referendum ballot, from the international president down to the local officers, the regional officers, the business agents, the shop stewards on the job, the committee members and safety committee members, as well as any other position in the union that you can name. They have campaigns that members in this House just could not believe as to politics, campaigns that are much more bitter at times than any federal, provincial or municipal election campaign, but nevertheless in the main they are good, honest, democratic election campaigns.

When I started work in the province of British Columbia in 1939, I went to work for the largest company in the province and one of the largest in the world. At that time there was no union, and it did not take me long to find that I was subject, as were all the other workers, to the whim not only of my foreman but my superintendent, the manager, the general manager and anybody else who took a dislike to me. There were times when I had to pay the foreman on payday either \$5 or give him a bottle of whisky to keep my job in the industry. In 1939 jobs were hard to come by, so you did what you had to do. Conditions were absolutely atrocious. Wages were bad and so were living conditions. The only thing that was good in the logging camps in those days was the food, and I will say we had the best food. But as for the rest of it, it was absolutely atrocious.

The first union organizer showed up in the logging camp that I was working in and I took union cards from him and went round to sign up workers I was engaged with. I was fired four days later for union activity. This is the situation the hon. member is trying to bring back. Frankly, if he has his way with this kind of amendment, then all an employer has to do is to make darned sure that every new employee that he hires is anti-union, and under the existing legislation it would not take very long for that union to be decertified. Then we would be right back to where we were. Frankly, Mr. Speaker, this is eighteenth century legislation that the hon. member is proposing. It is not even nineteenth century legislation, leave alone twentieth century.

[Mr. Neale (Vancouver East).]

People are still telling me what the hon. member said, that maybe unions are not as necessary as they used to be, since employers are now enlightened and would not dare treat their workers as they used to treat them before the advent of the labour movement. I have had practical experience of these enlightened employers, Mr. Speaker, and I should like to cite to hon. members just one example.

There is a large forest products company in British Columbia called Canadian Forest Products. It is the only B.C.-owned company in the province, except for some small ones. We organized that company after a very difficult struggle and I assisted in that organization. Finally we got a contract. We have had some difficulties with the owners of the company over the years, but in the main they have adhered to the finest contract in the woodworking industry to be found anywhere in the world. The workers are the highest paid, the best working conditions, the best fringe benefits of any workers anywhere in the world, and these benefits were negotiated by the workers through their elected officials representing them at the bargaining table.

This company bought a sawmill that was in existence in the province of Alberta, and the IWA once again went into that province and organized the company. The same employer, who was then paying the minimum wage in the province of British Columbia, \$3.25 an hour—this was some years ago—was paying \$1.35 an hour base rate in the province of Alberta. The International Woodworkers contract only called for \$1.85 base rate in Alberta, and this company refused to pay it. The union was forced to strike the company. The strike lasted one year and then it was broken. The same employer that we had in the province of British Columbia—this enlightened employer—destroyed the union there, and only just recently, after some four years, the union went back in there with certification and is trying to get a contract. So no one need tell me that employers have changed in any way.

What most people do not understand, Mr. Speaker, is that we live in what is called a free enterprise society. In my opinion, it is neither free nor enterprising when you consider the combines investigations and fines paid by monopolies, cartels and multinational corporations. But despite this it is called a free enterprise system. The labour movement—I have been criticized for saying this—is a necessary evil in the free enterprise system. The late President Roosevelt said that if he were a worker, the first thing he would do would be to join a union, because under the system that was absolutely necessary. John Paul Getty has said many times that he would rather deal with organized workers in a union than try to deal with them individually.

We have an adversary system. The employers, the owners of industry, invest their money for only one purpose; that is, to use our natural resources and our labour and make a profit through the production of a product at the cheapest possible rate for resale at the highest possible price. Conversely, Mr. Speaker, the labour movement's role is to get the highest wages possible for the people they were elected to represent and negotiate for, and to obtain the product at the cheapest possible price. So there will always be a conflict. If the hon. member for Prince George-Peace River thinks that conflict will disappear,