

Canada Labour Code Amendment

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I interrupt the hon. member, to tell him that his time has expired. He may continue if he has the consent of the House.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Is it agreed that he continue?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Oberle: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank my colleagues. As I was saying I am, as an employer, compelled to make deductions for the union in connection with the pension plan, even though less than 30 per cent of the membership will ever benefit. Why? Because you must be in the industry for at least eight years. In most northern areas of Canada people only work in the construction or wood industries for a certain period of the year to supplement a farming venture or some other small business. So, such people are making a donation to a nice, neat, powerful block of wealth. They know little about the administration as, in many cases, it is carried out in the United States.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the government of the day demands speedy passage of a foreign investment bill which would stop foreign interference in the sale of eight locomotives to Cuba—imagine the Cubans wanting to play railroad! However, no one ever dares to look at the books of some of the great unions, to find out in what way the Canadian people are forced to spend their money. I wonder what happened to the \$50 million which in 1971 went to the United States.

If this institution, Mr. Speaker, has been given any mandate by the Canadian people, it is a mandate to make sure that no one single person or group obtains too much power, be they business, church or, oh yes, union. It is then up to the people of Canada to keep us honest, so that human nature does not influence our deliberations, as might happen if we are allowed to become too powerful.

You see, Mr. Speaker, I grew up in a country where fat and lazy politicians and a greedy, arrogant business world allowed a third group to assume too much power. We all know that this world will never quite recover from the ensuing results. My father was a workman who protested against his union leaders. I will always hear the sobs of anguish, pain and despair which my mother tried to hide from us kids when we had to leave our home and move to another country. But I can also speak of the pride we feel for having questioned the system.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I wonder if it is not time to question the validity of some union agreements in Canada today. Since I have spoken out I have received literally hundreds of letters from various places, all lending support to my argument. The press is responding. It is not uncommon to see reports such as I have in front of me. One headline reads, "Tunnel, rock union picketed by workers". Another reads, "Union bitterness still not finished". Still another says, "Workers picket their own union". I will not read the articles. Oh, how I should like to provide some of these people with the opportunity of presenting their case before a standing committee of the House of Commons; for they, too, have a right to protection under the law. Of course, my colleagues will very likely assure themselves

[Mr. Oberle.]

that this will not happen, that we are no different from the ordinary politician, so why rock the boat?

The irony is that it is only human nature—I say this because of the union security clause, the blank cheque and government protection—which affects seriously the service one would expect unions to provide to their membership. The only real services the unions offer today involve services established by the government, services like those provided by Manpower, on the job training and other similar services.

Let us consider the pension plan for a moment and talk about the 30 per cent who qualify. When that faithful member who is in that bracket retires, he might well end up with a pension of \$65 per month. My hon. colleagues know, of course, what happens to that \$65. Our friend will get his basic old age pension of \$107 per month. In addition, he will qualify for an income supplement of \$77 per month which shrinks, however, by \$65. All he will have left is \$12. So, he will get no more and no less than anybody who has never contributed to such a plan.

However, it gets worse. If we suppose that the pension exceeds the \$77 and our friend is married, the government will combine the income of the married partners and take the rest off his wife. How many of my colleagues ever had a representation from any union protesting that kind of confiscation? Why should they have paid? The union had the benefit of the members' savings and will continue to get it. The same holds true, of course, for the guaranteed dues. Why should one fall over himself in the service of his fellow man if the cheque is guaranteed in any case?

My fight on behalf of the workman in our plant, Mr. Speaker, has earned me an action in the Supreme Court of British Columbia. I am, for this reason, reluctant to relate my own experience. All the same, I hope and pray that my tenure of office in the House of Commons will give me the opportunity, even if not today and even if my bill does not reach committee, to bring the case of thousands of unfortunate Canadians to the attention of the public, even though the government in the interest of expediency will ignore their plight.

It is wrong, as a condition of earning a livelihood in this country, to force a person to join a union, church or other fraternity, and then to force that person to have a portion of his earnings deducted from his pay. We can only make the union movement in Canada effective if we remove this type of discrimination. My bill provides for that. It would take the first and most important step in tearing down the barriers to which I referred earlier. If passed, it would give the manager the opportunity to visit the lunch room and discuss his business with people who know much more about their jobs than he does. Conversely, the employee will have the means to communicate directly with management if he is not in his union's confidence.

I hope that my colleagues will have the intestinal fortitude to act before it is too late.

Mr. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Prince George-Peace River (Mr. Oberle) followed a long road this afternoon before coming to the point with which his bill deals. He seems to be disturbed by something that took place in British Columbia. The example he referred to comes under provincial jurisdic-