

unions to assume such powers and abuse them, because, remember, Mr. Speaker, that is only human nature and human nature makes people do those things.

Let me give you some examples of what my bill is supposed to eliminate. As you know, Mr. Speaker, several of the major unions in Canada, and mostly the ones controlling the construction industry, operate with complete control. That means they hire and fire and set their own remuneration for the service. If you do not belong to the union you do not get hired, no matter how hard you have looked for a job, how competent you are or how much you need a job. If you fall out with one of the union leaders, you not only get fired but you also get blacklisted and you will have to change your vocation if you ever want to work again in this country. Is there a tribunal, a hearing, a court action, a right to appeal—why, of course not. Is there any protection under such a thing as a Canadian Bill of Rights or a minister of labour—well, of course not.

One such unfortunate fellow writes to me saying:

Mr. Oberle, I will never be able to work in my trade again. My wife and kids will be starving before I get another job. I have written to the minister of labour in Victoria and Ottawa (letters enclosed). They have turned me down. For God's sake, do something.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I also have the letters the ministers wrote and I will indulge by submitting them to the record as well. On November 14, 1972, the British Columbia minister of labour replied:

Thank you for your letter of November 1 having reference to problems you have encountered with the Tunnel and Rock Workers' Union, Local 168.

It would appear that the problems which you outline are essentially internal union ones, and not a matter for involvement of the Department of Labour.

I am, however, taking the liberty of referring your letter and attachment to the appropriate officer of the department, for study. If there proves to be a basis for any further action, I shall contact you accordingly.

Thanking you again for taking the time to write to me in this regard, I am,

Obviously, there was no basis for any further action because this letter was written in 1972 and there has been no correspondence since.

The other letter is from the Canada Department of Labour under the minister's signature and reads:

This is further to my letter of April 24 concerning the complaints of Messrs. Nescar and Gervais.

I have had a report from my Vancouver officers and I am told that the complaints have been previously taken up with the provincial authorities and that as recently as February 19, the Honourable W. S. King, provincial minister of labour, has taken the position that these matters fall within the internal administration of the union and that his department has no basis for intervention.

In the circumstances, you will appreciate that there is nothing that I can do as federal Minister of Labour, to assist the complainants.

Well, Mr. Speaker, would you have expected a different answer from the two labour ministers—of course not. Under what law would they act, unfair labour practices? That only applies to unscrupulous businessmen.

Let me relate to you a personal experience which involved a government appointed mediator appointed to settle a dispute not between my company and the union, but the work force of my company and the union. The

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dispute, Mr. Speaker, resulted over the fact that not a single employee in our plant had the privilege of being asked whether or not he wanted to join the union. That was settled between the B.C. government—and may I say that it was the former B.C. government that made the settlement—and a union, not after the plant was built and in operation but before it was built and in operation. The decision was made to sign a union agreement with people who were not part of the labour force of my company. My colleagues, my lawyer and myself were meeting with this person who posed the questions to us about whether our intention was merely to build up the business to sell or whether we intended to make a career of it. His advice was that if the former was the case, we could become quite the heroes if we held out, but if it was the latter we should sign up because if we did not the union would break us.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I had more faith in the integrity of that union than the British Columbia government had at that time. I had to have because my neck was stretched into the front door of the bank 36 inches. The manager's office was right beside the door and I could visualize a big long knife under his desk. I have little to offer to that industry but some principles and I intend to stick with them. We have still not been able to sign an agreement with the union and our men are denied the benefits of union affiliation. The only thing the certified union ever did for them was to hold repeated strike votes which the work force always turned down because they simply did not have a choice whether to sign or not.

● (1720)

Meanwhile, the union keeps negotiating and the only contract it will sign has a union, not a man or business security clause, which prescribes that we may do the hiring all right but that, if the man has not joined the union after 30 days of his employment with us, we must fire him. Now, Mr. Speaker, how do you fit that into the Canadian Bill of Rights? I am compelled, as a businessman, to make it a condition of employment, at a time when six per cent of our labour force is looking for work, that a man must become a member of an organization which is controlled from the United States.

You know, Mr. Speaker, interestingly enough, I have argued the justification of such a clause with some of the union bosses. I even remember arguing on the other side when I was a member of a bargaining committee with the mine, mill and smelter workers. One fellow told me the other day that if only a portion of the men would sign up and pay, the others would get a free ride and all the benefits of the bargaining process. He compared his union with the institution in which I am now speaking, Mr. Speaker. He said—and it almost made sense, because it would be fair to say that the unions are second in this country, in power and control, only to this place—"If I voted NDP and the Liberals got into power, I should not have to pay taxes." I am just about prepared to go along with him on that, if what he said would hold true for the Conservatives as well. Yes, Mr. Speaker, this is how far it has gone. So powerful are some of these unions today that they confuse themselves with a democratic institution.

How did they obtain this power? Well, let us look at the pension plan. I am, as an employer, compelled to deduct—