

Establishment of Industry Department

ployment. In fact, Canada has 12,000 more unemployed this month than during the corresponding month last year.

Quebec wishes to set up a steel industry and I would like the minister to assure us that if the provincial authorities submit an official request, the federal government will provide the necessary funds by means of long term loans, if necessary, to enable our province to fulfil its dream and to set up a steel industry which would greatly contribute to the elimination of unemployment and would help the people of Quebec recover their freedom in the economic field.

Mr. Speaker, when the bill was in its resolution stage, I asked whether it would be possible to study the adoption of the metric system. We, on this side of the house would like the minister to tell us of his views on the matter. We remember that the hon. member for Laurier (Mr. Chevrier) has already spoken on that point in the house. There is of course no question, for Canada, of discarding the English system—that is not at all what we have in mind. But we wonder if that system could not perhaps be incorporated in the metric system? In the past, some of our products—particularly machine and precision tools—could not be sold in Europe, and we know that the metric system is used in the world by nine countries out of ten.

Does the Canadian government intend to follow the lead of the United States, of Great Britain, and of nearly all the countries who use the English system? Is it prepared to set, as they have done, a special committee to study the possible adoption of the metric system by all the nations of the earth? Such widespread adoption would enable many of our products to sell abroad.

Mr. Speaker, we will pass the bill before us only on the understanding that the minister give us the assurance that the autonomy of the province is not to be violated, that he will consult the provinces and submit the bill to them.

We are prepared to co-operate with the government. It is said that we hinder the passage of bills, but almost all measures proposed, such as the bill respecting the municipal development and loan board or the present bill under consideration, constitute a perpetual encroachment on spheres reserved for the provinces.

As a matter of fact, I am of the opinion that due to the action of the present government, we will no longer have confederation in 1967; rather we will witness its dismemberment.

And that is why I personally support the position that Mr. Lesage and the other leaders of the province of Quebec have taken,

[Mr. Pigeon.]

as the federal government is ceaselessly interfering in fields which come under the jurisdiction of the provinces.

(Text):

Mr. D. G. Hahn (Broadview): Mr. Speaker, unlike the hon. member who has just preceded me, I would like to talk about Bill C-74 which deals with the department of industry. This bill proposes establishing a department that is going to be dealing with industry in our country.

I think first of all we must always ask ourselves, in looking at a proposal such as this where we are thinking of the government taking some action with respect to a private segment of the economy, if there is a need for the government to become involved in this type of activity. I think we on this side of the house feel—I know I certainly do—that those things that can be done by industry should be done by industry, without government interference. The government should only become involved if there is a need, if there are problems that industry itself cannot solve.

In the case of our industry now, there is ample evidence that some action by the government is required. Let us look at a few factors in connection with our industry.

First of all, we know that many people in this country depend on industry for their jobs. We also know that we have large-scale unemployment, and that therefore industry has not been able to provide the necessary jobs. This is true despite the fact that last year we had a large scale increase in industrial activity.

We also know that we will have many new people coming into the work force over the next few years, and we are going to have problems as automation releases people from their jobs. So that the situation is not going to get better; it will get worse.

We know as well that our industry must export, and increase its exports, if it is going to expand sufficiently to provide the necessary growth that will ensure the necessary jobs. If we are to export and compete in world markets we know we can only do so on two bases: We either have a unique product to sell, or we have low prices.

What about our industry at present? A large segment of it does not do its own designing. A large segment depends, through licensing arrangements, on designs done outside our country. In addition much of our industry is producing at the relatively low volume levels of our own domestic market, and hence it has the high costs that go with such a volume. A large segment of our industry has therefore neither the unique design