

the company was ready to take into account some adjustments in various departments of that industry.

In July 1977, the board made known its decision and reduced from 17 to 15 per cent and from 11 to 6 per cent the increments agreed to between the union and the company. As a result, with Christmas fast approaching, those workers have to pay back to the company about \$800 on average, that is a 42 cents an hour reduction. I realize the board has many cases to review but in this one the decision comes a year later. Mr. Speaker, here we have workers who certainly need their money as much as everybody else on the eve of the holiday season, yet they are forced to repay anywhere between \$600 and \$1,000—an average of about \$800. What will happen there?

Certainly the union is not ready to accept the board's ruling lying down and it is even considering work stoppage in that industry, in my own riding, and God knows we cannot afford to lose working hours in that area. I would say, Mr. Speaker, that the board has failed to pave the way by seeking the acceptance and cooperation of various departments and only succeeded in upsetting everybody and falling far short of its objective which is to alleviate inflation.

And on top of that, we have such problems. This is only one example out of hundreds and maybe thousands across the country where the workers are not satisfied and where the company has a definite edge. It can say: We are not refusing the salary increase you asked for. The company agrees and the board must bear the odium of the refusal. Now I would say, Mr. Speaker, that the lack of preparation, of planning and of essential co-operation, where the government could not possibly have cared less about getting that essential cooperation, has created a problem—among thousands—that I single out today because it concerns people who came to see me to tell me their troubles. In that case, how can we, Mr. Speaker, accept that invitation to support the government's efforts that was again extended to us a moment ago. Of course, the government has made some efforts, but because of this lack of badly needed planning and those proposals or projections which proved utterly wrong, do not ask us to extend our support of this government or ask the people to trust it. In the present circumstances, we would not think of accepting this invitation.

This motion also deals with the government's lack of foresight and leadership. Of course, Mr. Speaker, it deals also with the government's intention to develop an industrial strategy, to initiate new measures, to try to remedy all the setbacks that we have met. But how can be explained the lack of effective measures to safeguard the industries mentioned here today. Also, I can give you some evidence of that in my own constituency. A couple of days ago, I received a letter from a shoe factory in L'Assomption stating that for the coming year, the situation was disastrous and the order book so thin, that they were operating at a 50 per cent capacity. Production would have to be stopped in the spring if things do not change.

● (1732)

This is another case of an industry which employs a certain number of people and which is facing enormous difficulties.

### *Canadian Economy*

The minister tells us there will be a statement on Thursday, something like the one made a year ago about the textile industry, and that it will improve the situation in the footwear industry. But, Mr. Speaker, we have to ask one question of the government: Why has the government waited until these industries—be it the textile industry, the footwear industry, the furniture industry or the mining industry—are in trouble; why did the government not decide 10 or 12 years ago to implement the industrial strategies that it is talking about today? How is it that the government did not feel the need earlier to call on the provinces and all the economic sectors in the country to help it establish long-term policies for the protection of our Canadian industries?

Some will also say that the Department of Regional Economic Expansion, with its great generosity, invests money every day. But these efforts aim only at correcting a failure caused by the lack of an industrial strategy. Social legislation has even been mentioned. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Chrétien) has talked about employment insurance arrangements, but, Mr. Speaker, it is not with such arrangements that we shall be able to build a strong, united and well organized Canada. All this forces us to deplore in this House the lack of initiative, foresight and planning on the part of this government.

Of course, the Minister of Finance says that the referendum in Quebec should be held as soon as possible, but how can this have any relation with the lack of action and the present economic situation? I think, Mr. Speaker, that we should not hear any more, and I do not wish to have to repeat this again, that it is not only since November 15 of last year that the Canadian industry has been in difficulty, but that the situation has existed for many years. At least four or five years ago, our former leader, the hon. member for Halifax (Mr. Stanfield), travelled throughout Canada to warn Canadians about the danger facing us because of inflation and unemployment, and he was called a pessimist, Mr. Speaker.

Never did the government see any necessity or justification to seek the views of that hon. member who had proven his competency in economics. No, it would rather reject that solution for political reasons and now we are forced to have our Prime Minister travel about the country. I do not say he is wrong in doing so but this obligation brings him today to meet the ten provincial premiers and to consider an economic summit which should have been held several years ago. Had the government had the shrewdness that all governments should have, we would not be discussing today difficulties which are confronting Canadians and which generate also many sufferings for the population which has long since been waiting for corrective action.

They will say also that we need to discuss a renewed federalism. Saturday night I was listening to the Minister of State for Federal-Provincial Relations (Mr. Lalonde). He was committing himself to something knew. Recently I also heard the Prime Minister rejecting such an approach and saying: beware lest you let yourself be carried away in a third way or option. Yet, Mr. Speaker, the Pepin-Robarts Commission