

*Labour Adjustment Benefits*

Bill C-78 is aimed at relief for employees, particularly long term employees laid off if a plant or area has been designated by the minister. However, we still have bankruptcies. The largest single employer in Canada today is small business. How will this help a small company in Fort McMurray that declared bankruptcy last week? Five employees were thrown out of a job. More interesting, each was owed in wages in excess of \$1,000. Under the Bankruptcy Act, those people will be entitled to and will receive no more than \$500. Who is first on the list? The tax department of the Government of Canada is number one. It will get its money. The hell with the employee, the tax department gets its money first. Next, behind the tax man, is the bank. That is the next one. And then the secured debtors. Where is the employer or the employee? Way down at the bottom. But he only gets \$500. We had a case recently in Fort McMurray where an employer who employed 300 people fell well within the guidelines the minister is talking about. The firm Tarsands Machine and Welding Ltd. went bankrupt. The employees of that firm supplied their own welding units. They worked on an hourly rate. The most valuable possession that a man has to sell is his labour and time. These men were owed between \$3,000 and \$4,000 by Tarsands Machine and Welding Ltd. because they used their own trucks, their own welding units and they did the job with their own equipment. The material was supplied.

● (2130)

We have outmoded legislation sitting on the books that we can do something about. Under the Bankruptcy Act, those men can claim no more than \$500. I call that absolute, total injustice. Yet the minister introduces something here that is certainly needed. But what is needed more is incentive to help industry get going and incentive created by sound economic policy. As a result, these things would not happen.

For a moment I should like to address a particular case to the minister. For example, what happens to a man in his fifties who gets laid off from a job? He says, "I am not going to go on this welfare program. I am going to find another job." He moves from Labrador City to Fort McMurray on the understanding that when he leaves Labrador City, he will receive a relocation grant. He gets to Fort McMurray and he finds a job. He applies for the relocation grant. He cannot get it. His furniture, which he is moving, is being held for ransom until he can pay the moving bill. Yet, the Department of Manpower and Immigration stated, "I am sorry, you did not make the proper application in the proper way; therefore, you cannot draw the necessary funds." The thing we should be doing is to ensure that these people who do want to move are allowed to move and are given the encouragement. Not one man after 20 or 30 years of employment wants to go home, face his family and say, "I am no longer employable. I do not have the necessary skills to go out and get another job elsewhere." I cannot think of anything worse than for a man to go home, face his family and say, "I worked 20 or 30 years but I am not worth a damn because I have nothing I can sell to an employer. Nobody wants to hire me." I saw that happen to my father. I saw what it did to him for a period of two months when he

was unemployed. It is the only time that I remember his being unemployed. I shall tell you Mr. Speaker, it drove him crazy. I feared to come home at night. My father was a kind and gentle man who used to spend time with his children, but I will say that during that unemployment period it slowly ate away at him and I was afraid to come home because I did not know how he would react. That went on until he found another job.

I am saying to the minister through you, Mr. Speaker, that this does not solve the ills that are caused by plant shutdowns. Not one man receiving this early retirement funding or readjustment funding, or whatever one wants to call it, likes it. He will look at the cheque from the Government of Canada and, particularly if he has worked for 20 years, he will know that he is receiving welfare. He will not like it. What a way to destroy a man! Think of it. Of everyone who is entering the labour force in the past year, and of all the young people, 44 per cent could not find a job. That is 44 out of 100. If one were to walk down the street and count 100 people walking, 44 of those people have not found a job in the past year. Why? Do we lack the natural resources, the development? Do we lack the capital? Are there not people in companies who are ready to invest in our resources and in the development of our resources? Do we not have the brains in Canada to develop our industries and the technology?

We do have the resources and the people, Mr. Speaker. But we have to get some sanity into the government. It has to understand that a man's initiative is worth something. He cannot be stifled at every turn. When a man wants to invest his time and his money, allow him to do so. Let him create jobs. Do not turn on him with a budget, as the Minister of Finance did on November 12. Do not change the rules so that a man says, "They have created incentives for me 10 years ago, that is the same government that created tax incentives and said to go ahead and invest in apartment buildings, MURBs, to borrow money and put it into Registered Retirement Savings Plans and borrow money and invest it in our economy and our industries". They did this because these were incentives. They said, "We can do this". Those same incentives became loopholes to the Minister of Finance. The government introduced them as incentives, and then the same government calls them loopholes and states that it has to close them all off. It is slowly destroying the initiative of the Canadian people. This is the kind of thing that we will be seeing more of in time. We will create legislation that will help with the problems. Big government will move in and fix everything up. It is problems that governments create themselves, to begin with. I find it totally and absolutely unacceptable.

Clause 4 sets up the labour adjustment review board. There is no way that a five-member board will be able to handle the number of applications which this legislation will generate. What are we looking at on top of the labour review board? We are looking at an expanded public service. Once again we are looking at an appointed labour review board—go ahead, open the doors and bring in more public servants! That section of a department will probably expand because it will have to go across the country. I would suspect that perhaps there will be