

*Job Creation*

Again, we would have lost a major part of the economic fabric of this nation.

I suggested that concurrent with that is another very serious problem. If farmers cannot replace machinery when it is necessary to replace it, we would be facing a gradually diminishing production level. Along with that, the farmer would not be able to maintain the competitive nature of his operation. Gradually the price of food would rise. The farmer would not be able to keep his operation going in the way it should, and inevitably that would cause even further economic dislocation somewhere down the road. The lay-offs at Massey-Ferguson are the beginning of an end to an industry unless this government is prepared to take immediate action to offset it. But I do not see any evidence of this government being prepared to do that.

Let me talk about people for a moment. When 1,750 people are laid off in a place like Brantford, that is serious. The spin-off is devastating. The agriculture implement industry alone has lost some 3,500 jobs in the last year. Those jobs have just disappeared from the marketplace in Brantford. There is nothing to replace them. Those people still have to pay their bills and their taxes. They still have to feed their families.

• (1530)

You might ask me, Mr. Speaker, why do they not go and find jobs some place else? Where are they going to find those jobs? Are they going to go to Chatham, perhaps, where International Harvester has just laid off 600 people, where Motor Wheel has just laid off 149, and where Rockwell laid off 500? They can just go down the street a way and they will find that the very same situation which exists in the community they live in exists in the community beside them. Will they go to Hamilton and attempt to get a job there, where plants are laying off large numbers every day? Where do they go? Perhaps they should go to Toronto and apply at McDonnell Douglas, or maybe they will drop into Windsor and see if they can get jobs with Chrysler. Maybe they will come to Oakville and knock on the door of Ford. All these companies have been laying off by the thousands. Maybe they will decide to uproot their families and travel to the opposite end of the country, British Columbia, and try to find jobs in the forest industry, only to find that the forest industry is not working.

What kind of insanity is it when the government cannot see that there is a serious and tragic problem all across this country? If this problem was isolated to one geographic area I would say there perhaps could be an excuse for the government not dealing with it. But the fact of the matter is that it exists in every single community; it is at the very core of the community, and generally speaking in the small communities it is the major employer who is on the way out.

I want to say to the minister and the government that there is a way that we can bring some sense to this lunacy. Let me suggest, to begin with, that this government should now undertake an inventory of every single project that has any social value in every community across this country. The government should take a look at how one could reasonably fund those

projects at this time, to move them forward in time and begin them now rather than two years from now in order to initiate that economic stimulation which would take place.

I am not talking about pouring dollars into useless things, but when there are undertakings that obviously will have to be proceeded with over the course of the next two or three years I would urge the government to compile a listing and begin now to make available the necessary capital to start those projects.

I want further to suggest that there are sufficient numbers of people who are unemployed in this land and looking for work that we could begin, in an effort to meet what is now becoming a housing crisis with vacancy rates down below 1 per cent in most metropolitan areas, to build the homes that those people need, using the products of this country and the productive capacity of those people who are unemployed.

I want to suggest to the government that if we were to elevate our expectation level and produce in this country the number of homes that by any calculation we are going to need over the next five years, on a systematic year by year basis, not only would we create employment for the people who would build the homes, those people who work on the job sites, but we would create employment for the people in the forest industry, at Weldwood and other places, and we would create employment for those people who used to make the bathroom fixtures at Wabco Standard. We would also create employment for the people who make the tiles that go on roofs, the tiles that go on floors and the piping that goes into the infrastructure. We would create employment for people who make wallboard and for people all across this country in numbers that would not only bring down the employment level but would help to ease the terrible problems so many families are facing today.

This is an investment. We are not talking about give-aways, we are talking about investment. We are talking about investing capital now in the future of the country. We are talking about investing money that will ultimately be invested in any event. We are suggesting that if ever there was a time to commit money, that time is now. We have to make sure we meet the basic requirements of people, and we are not meeting them. If the private sector cannot or will not meet their obligations, particularly in things like shelter—and I suspect will not is more likely the case than cannot—then the government has an obligation as an investment in the future to make available the capital necessary to proceed with the building of the homes and apartments that must be built in order to meet the need.

Let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, and I know you understand this being a student of economics, that if we were to start there is no question at all that the close to 8 per cent level of unemployment we now have—the million people who are at home looking for work today—might be cut in half. We could create jobs for half of those people who are not all on the public payroll. In fact, most of them are not on the public payroll. This would revitalize communities which range all the way from Vancouver to St. John's. It would revitalize the areas of this country that desperately need some injection of hope. It