

Government Orders

am not satisfied with the return I am getting on it," we say: "Don't be so unreasonable. Think of the entire economy. Think of the shippers, think of the small businessmen, think of the people you are hurting".

However, when a money speculator or a currency trader or an investor says: "I withdraw my investment. I withdraw my money from this situation because I am not happy with what I am getting," we say: "That is the way the world works, you had better get used to it". This is a double standard that ought to be exposed.

We must treat both arguments for economic self-interest equally. I would be quite prepared to live in a world where unions, like everyone else, were made accountable to the common good. But I am not prepared to live in a world where unions get the argument that they have to take everyone else's welfare into account while money speculators, investors and everyone else can just do whatever in hell they like and that is called reality. No way.

Mr. Jim Peterson (Willowdale, Lib.): Madam Speaker, can I ask your advice? How much longer are we debating?

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Until 8.07 p.m. We have 80 minutes debate allocated. We have 17 minutes until 8.07.

Mr. Peterson: I am very pleased to be able to say a few words tonight because I believe we are going through a period of incredible transition in our country. We have seen the government having to do things that five years ago we never would have dreamed would have been necessary when we brought down the budget.

Canadians realize that there is no longer that pot of gold out there or that our future is assured or guaranteed. People are uneasy because they know we are facing change. They also know that in Canada we have assets unparalleled in any other country in the world: natural resources and human resources to actually make the transition from a resource based economy to an economy dependent on human skills competing in the global economy.

We can do this but it is going to require a lot of changed attitudes. I do not believe that in the future the concept of management on the one side; labour, be they unionized or not, on the other side, be it government or the public, are going to necessarily be the stakeholders in the way they have in the past.

We have introduced in our country and throughout the western world, for very good reasons, the concept of collective bargaining, the concept that workers have the right to negotiate freely for their conditions and for their terms of employment. Management has the right to lock out workers if they do not accept the union offer. However, more and more we are going to have to realize that workers are citizens of the country, that manage-

ments are citizens of the country and that all of us have a stake in finding new ways to deal with labour disputes.

Can we afford to go back to the era of 10 years ago when we had the worst labour-management record of any of the industrialized countries? We were doing it to ourselves. Of course we cannot because we are now competing in a global economy where other nations have learned to resolve their labour disputes in a civilized, non-confrontational, non self-inflicting damage manner. Anytime there is a strike or a lockout it is an admission of failure in the collective bargaining process. Let us recognize that.

• (1955)

I am glad in the present circumstances that we let this thing go as long as we possibly could to see if a collective agreement could be arrived at by a negotiated solution. This is always best, rather than imposing conditions which may not be acceptable to either side.

We had to act however. The member for Wild Rose puts it very forcefully. They went on strike this morning. That is why, with the consent of all members, we are sitting tonight to pass that legislation. Maybe some members, like the member for Winnipeg Transcona, do not necessarily agree with this. I understand some of his concerns for the working person. However we have to recognize that the moment we start using lockouts and strikes, we are denying our competitive ability vis-à-vis all of our neighbours in the global economy. How irrational can we be to allow these things to take place?

Legislation preventing strikes in every circumstance is obviously not the solution. As people with a duty of public leadership in Parliament perhaps we have to work more closely with labour and management to see if we can settle these strikes before they become self-defeating for all of us. Maybe we are going to have to find ways to say: "You just cannot strike in certain circumstances. You cannot lock out in certain circumstances because it is against the national interest".

Maybe we can look at new solutions such as final offer arbitration.

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Peterson: Maybe these are some of the approaches we can go into. However, we know the risk is always there if management and labour in a dispute know that government will step in and settle that dispute by legislation. Then they will not negotiate in good faith.

Looking ahead, the solutions are not always that obvious to us. If they were, we would have found them a long time ago. No one in the House believes that strikes and lockouts are the solution. But I do believe that if we keep stressing that we are now in this together, it is not a question of adversaries and stakeholders fighting it out. We are all in the same boat. If we are