

Employment Support Bill

ter, later on in answer to a question said "oh yes, we help various manufacturing industries and some other large firms in coping with the problems they face". But what did they do for agriculture? Absolutely nothing. The minister knows very well that there are various sectors of farming and fishing in Canada which are very dependent upon export markets.

Let me give one specific example. Wheat producers had to take the brunt of an immediate 6 cents per bushel drop in the price of wheat. The government allowed them to take it; they allowed this to go on without any interference or any assistance in any way. This is indicative of the government's attitude and approach to agricultural matters. Now, we have the new situation which I have been describing in which the government is just adopting a stand pat policy in dealing with agricultural problems which have arisen as a result of recent economic developments. I cannot stress too much the importance of this question. I feel this is one of the fundamental questions which we are facing in Canada at present. Are we going to see a rural society in this country in the future or is the government going to follow a course of action and a set of policies which will allow our rural society to be destroyed, to simply wither away, or possibly even a set of policies which will help it to be destroyed? I think we need some answers from the minister and from the government, not in any vague terms or in terms of any fairy stories about the situation being under review. I think we need some concrete answers from the government as to what it will do to help agriculture in the present situation. We have had nothing up to the present time and I think that results in a very serious lack of confidence in the government.

Because I feel this matter is so important and one that needs to be given further consideration within the context of this debate, I propose to move a motion which relates to clause 11 of Bill C-262. As members know, this is the clause of the bill which provides for the payment of grants to assist manufacturing industries in particular. Hon. members will also be familiar with the motion which I attempted to introduce yesterday in the House at the report stage and which it was not possible to introduce at that time. This would have provided for the inclusion of agriculture and fishing within the terms of that section. I cannot move an amendment which would make specific reference to the additions that I would like to see made to clause 11 of the bill, but I think I can make my intent quite clear in moving the amendment which I now place before you. I move, seconded by my colleague, the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar (Mr. Gleave):

That Bill C-262 be not now read a third time, but that it be referred back to the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs for the purpose of reconsidering clause 11 thereof.

I commend this amendment to the consideration of the House.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Chair has a copy of the proposed amendment that was just read by the hon. member for Regina East (Mr. Burton). My impression is that the amendment is in order and I will rule that way unless hon. members want to advise the Chair to the contrary. The Chair is prepared to put the motion.

• (4:50 p.m.)

[*Translation*]

Mr. C. A. Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, in view of the remarks made by the leader of our party, the hon. member for Témiscamingue (Mr. Caouette) and by my colleagues, the hon. members for Bellechasse (Mr. Lambert) and Compton (Mr. Latulippe) on motion for third reading of the bill, I would like to inform the House that we are more strongly opposed to this measure after it has been referred to the Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs. We have voted against referring this bill to the committee and we will oppose its passage to the end, because it aims at protecting millionnaires rather than workers by favouring the piling up of surpluses which will not be exported to the United States, thus damaging consumption in Canada.

Mr. Pepin: What a broad viewpoint.

Mr. Gauthier: I know what I am talking about since I am a member of the Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs where I had the opportunity of hearing various submissions. I have also received letters and telegrams pointing out the dangers of this bill.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Howard) stated this afternoon that this bill was meant to clarify certain matters raised before the committee rather than to provide subsidies to support employment, although this measure provided subsidies to this effect. This is not the kind of statement that would shed light on the various ways in which the bill can be interpreted.

I do not intend to repeat the effective and realistic proposals which my colleagues have submitted to the government, although I would be tempted to do so following the statements I heard from several hon. members on the government benches saying: Let us have better suggestions than those contained in this bill.

This proves once more than none are so deaf as those who will not hear. I shall therefore endeavour to impress upon hon. members on the government benches to use reason instead of blindly following their leader, as they are accustomed to do, or again, I will point out to the people who are conversant with federal matters, the erroneous meaning of the bill.

If we pause to consider the objective of the bill, we read the following in clause 3:

The purpose of this Act is to provide a means to support levels of employment in Canadian industry when other countries impose temporary import surtaxes—

In my opinion this is more a pretext than a goal to achieve for the government which will certainly not miss such a splendid opportunity to create a new commission whose function will be to protect those who protect it. In fact, you have noted that as soon as the government has a small problem they create commissions so as to act finally as they please but which they use as a protective screen against all-too-often justified criticism.

For an industrial corporation to become qualified for federal help, the production factor will not be taken into account. Besides this was stated by a government official before the Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic