

The Budget

About 10 days ago Storwal International in the city of Pembroke announced bankruptcy with 250 employees being put out of work in the next few days.

It is a desperate situation and I am glad that the hon. member for Restigouche—Chaleur highlighted his speech this morning with that empathy and that feeling for people out there.

On Saturday morning at a meeting in Pembroke there were people sitting there, employees of Storwal International, tears in their eyes, at a total loss as to how they are going to pay their mortgages or make their car or truck payments. And this comes on top of the collapse of the lumber industry in the Ottawa valley generally.

As the hon. member for Restigouche—Chaleur knows, there is a lot of comparison between the economy of his area and the economy of the area that I represent.

I am sure that this is another figure that would relate to his case as well. In 1991 in the county of Renfrew and the immediate surrounding townships, \$50 million was paid out in unemployment insurance. The welfare budget in a small village of 1,400 people has increased 2,000 per cent over a year ago.

I want to join the hon. member for Restigouche—Chaleur in stating that I do not know how this can go on without this Parliament and this government doing something about it.

It is not a case of lambasting one another any longer in this House. It is a case of what are we going to do for those people out there who stand to lose their homes. They have lost their jobs. We have people 50 years of age who have worked in a mill or a factory for 20 to 25 years. Where are they going to go? We have the older workers program. I certainly hope it applies because I am going to be attempting to make use of it.

There is an attempt on the part of the employees of Storwal International to try to buy the plant and they have been putting forward a mammoth effort. I would like to call upon the government and the Department of Industry, Science and Technology to give these people some assistance to really try to work with them in setting up a new structure.

I see that the Minister of Supply and Services is in the House today. In keeping with the empathy and the

seriousness of this situation out there, I want to say that I stopped at the truck stop on Highway 17 at Antrim on the way down yesterday morning. There were two men there, truck drivers who had just finished delivering a load of furniture to the Government of Canada, purchased through the Department of Supply and Services. That was the last load of furniture that would be coming down from Storwal International to the federal government.

I want to say that at least the federal government was buying that product, a Canadian product. I think that is the emphasis we have to go on. I know that the Minister of Supply and Services, when I make this representation will know that it is a very serious one and that he takes these things very seriously.

If we are going to be lambasted by the Americans at this particular time for the sake of an American election, I think it is time to really get aggressive about buying Canadian. I hope that the cabinet comes in with that decision. I for one, and I am sure that people on this side of the House, will be totally in consort with that because we have to stand up and be counted as Canadians and fight for our Canadian people.

I thank the hon. member for Restigouche—Chaleur for his excellent input.

Mr. Arseneault: I would like to say first of all, if we can go back a little bit, in 1984 the Conservatives campaigned on fiscal responsibility. They said they would put the fiscal house in order.

Now here we are so many years later and all we hear every time we talk about fiscal responsibility is: "Oh, well, we inherited a debt". If they cannot put the house in order, they should not be there. It is as simple as that. If they have given up, tell us that they have given up and get out of office. It is as simple that.

There is another point I would like to make when we talk about compassion. There is a quote I would like to leave the House with, which says simply:

We shall be judged both as individuals and as a society by the manner in which we care for those unable to care for themselves.

That is a direct quote from our present Prime Minister in the book *Where I Stand*. I would hope that he will go back and read those words and think about the unemployed people of Canada.