

Labour Adjustment Benefits

ernment calls them, joint planning committees, which will be able to give some thought and consideration toward planning how to help the workers relocate. That is a worthy objective. However, we have looked at the bill and the unions have looked at the bill and they see that the joint planning committees have no real power. There is no adjustment fund from which the workers could draw benefits until they could make the transition.

We felt that if the committees were to do the job, they should have the right to complete disclosure of the finances and assets of a company. When I had the temerity to move that kind of amendment, it was greeted with shock and pain by all the Liberal and Conservative members. They could not believe that anyone would make that kind of suggestion. If we are serious, and if we really want the workers to feel that they have some rights and that they have been given some consideration, why should workers not have the right to know everything about the financial situation of a company?

Yesterday's and today's news tells us that the United Auto Workers and the Ford Motor Company have reached an historic agreement in their contract negotiations. The companies, beset by fallen sales, buffeted by competition from foreign cars, have called on the workers to take quite substantial reductions in their hourly pay rates and other benefits. Cognizant of the fact that tens of thousands of their members are now unemployed, the unions have had to give serious consideration to the proposals of the Ford Motor Company. We do not know the details of the agreement. We do know that in its recent agreement with the company, the union has been able to get the right to look at the financial structure and the assets and to get information about the future plans of the Ford Motor Company. I understand that Ford has made the commitment that it will not move any of its existing operations, such as engine parts or anything else now being produced in the United States, to another country, as has happened in recent years. That is real planning, real joint labour-management discussions and negotiations. As far as we can tell, the joint planning committees proposed under this bill will have no real power.

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We have heard from unions which represent the workers in some of these cities which have been designated. Sept-Îles and Schefferville have been designated to benefit under the ILAP program.

Because of the recession, the iron ore mines in Quebec and Labrador are not selling the same tonnage as they did years ago. Thousands of workers have been laid off. This is a one-industry area. Not only do the workers not have jobs, they cannot sell their homes. The area has been designated under the ILAP program for which \$350 million is supposedly being appropriated. The union tells us that the committee which has been established has made a number of recommendations, most of which have been ignored by the government.

Sydney, Nova Scotia, and the steel mill there have been designated to be helped. Sysco has had persistent major lay-

offs since 1967. There is little evidence that the provisions of this bill will help Sydney. The steel mill is the major employer in the area. It needs an infusion of capital of major proportions in order to be competitive and to continue to operate. There is no indication from the government that it proposes to do that. Many older workers are retiring, and the younger workers are leaving because they cannot find permanent employment. The town continues to decline.

Windsor is facing major problems. We can go over this city by city. Even when this bill passes, it will provide very little help. The hon. member for Rosedale admitted that this bill will provide some assistance for the tens of thousands of people who have lost their jobs and the thousands who will lose their jobs in the next year or two. It is a step in the right direction. However, as I said earlier, it is so small and so hesitant a step that we believe we ought not to vote for the bill because, when passed, it will create an impression which would be false, namely, that much will be accomplished when, in fact, very little will be accomplished.

Mr. Ian Waddell (Vancouver-Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take the opportunity to make some remarks on this bill in particular and unemployment in general as, I am told, this bill tries to address the problem of unemployment. The hon. member who spoke last and the hon. member for Rosedale (Mr. Crombie) before him mentioned that the bill takes a small step in the right direction. If anybody should know about small steps, I suggest it is the hon. member for Rosedale and I because we take small steps every day.

While the hon. member for Rosedale may be happy with this small step, I am not. As pointed out by the hon. member for Winnipeg North (Mr. Orlikow) at this time with one million unemployed, this bill is a disgrace. At a time when 500,000 young people between the ages of 15 and 24 are unemployed, this bill is a disgrace. At a time of unemployment in the maritimes and Atlantic Canada of over 16 per cent, this bill is a disgrace. At a time when a portion of the forest industry of British Columbia is out of work and a time when numerous auto workers are out of work because of a lack of government policy and other reasons, this bill is a disgrace.

How can one vote for a bill that does so little to address a really big unemployment problem in this country? People know that every day in the House of Commons the members of the NDP are always complaining and asking questions about jobs. They ask what we would do. That is a question that demands an answer. Instead of bringing in a bill like this to help a small proportion of the unemployed, dealing with the problem in a small way, we would deal with it in a big way and really tackle the unemployment problem.

It is not that difficult. It is really a political question. It is a question of will. Do you really want to tackle unemployment or not? The one-party system in this country, the Liberal government which has been in office far too long, decided some time ago and has continued with the policy—at least it has been straightforward and consistent—to govern the country in a way which basically consists of being hewers of wood and drawers of water.