

Income Tax Act

business. They were provided with nearly \$11 million in order to be competitive, and for assistance in research. If that money had been used to tool up that plywood plant and to make it efficient, 700 workers would not have to be laid off.

● (1552)

Why do we continue to give massive subsidies and tax concessions to big businesses which are now the weakest part of our economy? Small business is not the weakest part, but it has been ignored and ignored, and now we are paying the price. Workers at Inco are being laid off as well as workers at MacMillan Bloedel. MacMillan Bloedel lost about \$50 million because of some very dumb executive decisions. MacMillan Bloedel did not tool up, did not become efficient, and did not use the government help which had been so generously given by the people of Canada, including the workers in its own plant whose taxes went to help in subsidizing the company, to making it efficient and to allowing it to purchase new equipment. Now the company wrings its hands and says it "cannot compete any more. That old mill has to be shut down". That is wrong and immoral.

We need some leadership from the government. The government should end those kinds of concessions to major companies. Concessions should be tied to jobs. If we are going to give massive subsidies to MacMillan Bloedel, let us see that there are job guarantees for Canadians.

In this bill there is a little concession for small business, and that little concession is tied to jobs. That should have been done with major corporations a long time ago. This government did not have the foresight to see what was happening. It was taken advantage of, just as it was taken advantage of in the negotiations regarding the Alcan pipeline.

Mrs. Holt: What did your buddies do in B.C. when they had a chance?

Mr. Leggatt: The hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. Holt) asks what my buddies did in B.C. when they had a chance. Ocean Falls, Can-cel and Kootenay Forest Products made enough money last year to balance the provincial budget for the people of British Columbia.

Mrs. Holt: The government went practically bankrupt.

Mr. Leggatt: In B.C. we have come back to the same proposition whereby we are allowing our economy to be dominated and controlled by major corporations which are laying off more workers than were ever laid off under the previous provincial regime. That is what is occurring in B.C.

We will support this legislation, although we want some minor changes, or at least some thought about some minor changes. It is very much a band-aid approach to a massive unemployment problem. If the government opposite cannot come up with more original ideas, it should just throw in the towel. This bill could have been brought in before the winter season. I suspect there will be more pie-in-the-sky announcements before the election, but if this bill is the response of this government to the over one million unemployed in Canada, the

[Mr. Leggatt.]

government deserves the response it will get from the Canadian people.

[Translation]

Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, I do not want in any way to delay the passage of Bill C-23 but still I would like to make a few comments because I consider it to be my duty to express the needs of the south shore area which I have the honor to represent.

Mr. Speaker, as most government bills to curb rising prices and unemployment, this proposed employment tax credit program is a sort of hand-out to industry but I will not prolong my comments on this aspect of the bill because I will certainly have the opportunity in the near future to participate in a more comprehensive debate on this issue. There is no doubt that a program designed to create jobs can hardly and honestly be criticized. This is quite normal because that is what we want, namely to provide jobs for workers who are able to work for the betterment of this country. I understand that this is an innovative program. Furthermore, it meets a suggestion I made in my speech on second reading of Bill C-11. I said at that time:

I have a suggestion to make to the Minister of Finance: I think that rebates made on real investments in Canada might be much more indicated. Of course, these partial rebates could be calculated according to the number of jobs created.

There would then be a reaction between capital and manpower resources.

I must say that this bill comes very close to the spirit of my suggestion. The idea to increase the credit in proportion to the regional rate of unemployment is only logical. On the other hand, it raises again the need to designate the south shore area as a special and under-privileged area.

Just recently I watched a television program featuring several Liberal members of the Quebec City area. It was interesting to hear those members' comments when describing the Quebec City area as an area which had not been advantaged in recent years, especially because the attention of governments had been directed mostly towards the Montreal area for the preparation of the Olympic games, and those Olympic games have left behind some problems, not only for the city of Montreal, not only for the province of Quebec, but also for Canada. They said that was why the Canadian government had again designated the Montreal area as a special zone to help local industries provide jobs for the numerous unemployed people living there. But also, Mr. Speaker, those hon. colleagues were emphasizing how important it was to have a federal cabinet minister in the Quebec City area to reassess the requests and claims of members in the cabinet and that representation of the Quebec City area in the Cabinet was absolutely necessary, extremely important, something I am not disputing.

● (1602)

I still believe that all areas of Canada must be fairly represented within the executive of the national government. But what surprised me is that after describing all the advantages that an area can have when it is represented by a minister of the federal cabinet, someone—I think it was the