

*Industry, Science and Technology*

• (1240)

Those times, unfortunately, have disappeared. They have disappeared in large part, I think, not because of changes in the world economy, though those changes have taken place—they have been the challenge—but because both the Parties in this House that have formed federal Governments have not been prepared to meet those challenges and do something creative to give us the kind of industrial base which would provide full employment for Canadians. In my view, it is perhaps the most fundamental, the most damaging and the most shameful dereliction of duty on the part of the Liberal and Conservative Parties when they have been in power. They have not been prepared to say that the industrial future of Canada matters, first of all, and secondly, that Government has a responsibility to provide leadership in setting it right. Instead federal Governments have sat back and have left the initiative to the private sector. Governments have been prepared to have programs but those programs have essentially offered give-aways and bribes to private companies to do things which the private companies most likely would have done in any event. So we have faced a situation where the abdication of responsibility has been massive.

It is time that this Ministry of Industry, Science and Technology, which is finally being established, takes as its responsibility a commitment to Canada to see to it that industrial development becomes a priority which is thought out, worked at systematically, and which is built in this country so that we have a real future for the hundreds of thousands of unemployed people and for the many of those who will be coming on to our labour markets in the future.

There has been a great debate in some parts of the world about whether the manufacturing sector matters in the future of our economies, those of western Europe, North America and Japan. This question, by being asked, has demonstrated the lack of responsibility which has been there on the part of many Governments throughout the OECD countries to answer that question by saying, yes, manufacturing does matter; building an industrial base in this country and right across it does matter because that is the basis upon which we will achieve the full employment which matters to people and to communities on a human level.

As I think of this Government's record so far, I have to say that the record is poor. It is a record which has taken some initiatives, but the Government has not pursued those initiatives. It has not had a sense of priority concerning the structural base of our economy. One simply has to look at the revolving door of Ministers who have had responsibility for this area of policy over the last four and a half years. We started with Sinclair Stevens. We moved to Michel Côté, to the present Minister responsible for the Treasury Board, and then we moved to the present Minister. I congratulate him on his appointment, but I challenge him to take this Ministry seriously, to see to it that there is a long-term commitment on the part of the Government to building a solid industrial basis from which we can develop a full economy for Canadians.

One can think of sector after sector in which this has not taken place. For myself, coming from Windsor, it is perhaps the failures in the auto industry which have struck me most forcibly. Again, it has been a failure on the part of the Government and the previous Government. The previous Liberal Government of Mr. Trudeau set up a task force on the auto industry which brought employers, employees and parts producers together to make recommendations.

They made a series of excellent recommendations, perhaps the most fundamental of which was that there should be a notion, a commitment to Canadian content to which all significant importers of automotive parts and vehicles into this country should commit themselves. This would have given us from 40,000 to 60,000 extra jobs in Canada. That suggestion was ignored by the Liberal Government of the past. It has been ignored by this Government since 1984, despite the fact that a Parliamentary committee chaired by the present Minister of State for Science and Technology (Mr. Andre) came to the conclusion that, yes, there did have to be much more pressure put on Japanese and Korean car producers to ensure that they met commitments to Canadian content in this country.

Now that the Minister is in a position to take some responsibility for the Government's actions, I ask him to make certain that he will himself push to see that the unanimous recommendations of the committee get taken seriously and are put into effect. One can make the same point with respect to the forestry sector of our economy, because what we have seen from the Government is a series of actions which have hurt rather than