

*Employment Support Bill*

Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Pepin) stated these facts very clearly at the beginning of the debate.

The hon. member for Duvernay made a number of general statements in yesterday's debate that are reasonable enough on the surface, but dangerously deceptive in the conclusions that are to be drawn from them. He said, for example, that the exports from resource industries, particularly mining, oil and gas, did not contribute to employment, which he correctly named as our number one national problem, did not contribute to tax revenues and did not, in any significant way, help Canadians. He seemed to go much further than this. He said that non-renewable resources are our stock of capital and that we are violating the trust to future generations when we permit a cubic foot of natural gas, a barrel of oil, or a ton of our metals to be exported unnecessarily. These statements he appeared to make without qualification in a form that gave me, and I am sure other hon. members, a great deal of concern.

Any hypothesis must stand the test of facts. The first fact I challenge the hon. member for Duvernay to verify is this. What taxes is he talking about? In a previous speech he delivered this spring, he restricted his comments particularly to corporation business taxes. Presumably, he has done the same thing now. The resource industries that he is talking about, Mr. Speaker, pay local municipal property taxes, in varying degrees it is true, but they do pay them. Secondly, the employees of these companies who work in Canada pay personal income taxes, and personal income tax has become a much higher percentage of government revenue than it was in previous years.

At the very best, the hon. member's argument is an argument for tax reform which certainly has its merits, but it is not an argument in terms of resource export policy. Mr. Carter made the case for tax reform very forcefully, and I must confess that in a number of respects I have sympathy for his point of view on that particular point.

I am going to ask hon. members of the NDP opposite, those who applauded so very lustily yesterday, what will they say to the residents of Thompson, Manitoba? If we took the advice we were given yesterday and stopped exports of nickel would the people now living in Thompson be there? Granted, the community has a smelter and processes the ore, but in that part of his argument there is a conflict. The member stated very clearly that the export of such commodities was a betrayal of our national trust. Will the hon. members of the NDP who sit in this House representing constituencies in Manitoba go into Thompson and say to the people living there, the town of Thompson should not exist and we should not allow the export of so much nickel? If we are elected to the federal House we are going to make sure there are no more Thompsons created. Will they say that? Can any of us conceive that if any member from that party is prepared to go in and say these things in Manitoba he would receive any encouragement whatsoever from the New Democratic premier of that province?

[Mr. Francis.]

Let us take another example, the potash mines of Saskatchewan. This is a non-renewable resource, presumably of the kind the hon. member for Duvernay had in mind while speaking. Will the members of the NDP go and tell the newly elected premier of Saskatchewan, Mr. Blakely, that he must stop the export of so much potash? Will they say it is a mistake to export potash excessively because this is a violation of a trust that we owe to future generations of Canadians? The members of the New Democratic Party have had to face this issue more squarely, or should I say with two opposing points of view, to a greater degree than any other party in this House. Indeed, the Waffle wing, which seems to command a fair amount of support in their ranks, puts forward an ill-conceived theory of economic isolationism that is hardly credible in our generation and combines it with an emotional appeal to socialize industries.

Coming again to the speech made yesterday by the hon. member for Duvernay, he says one should distinguish between renewable and non-renewable resources and apply different policies. One has to examine this and ask what are the renewable resources; forest products and fisheries? Will he please tell us how we can sell more wheat? He feels we should export still more, but please tell us how we can do it. Certainly none of us are in disagreement with the need to seek better markets wherever they may be found. Having regard to these products, it is a counsel to perfection to say this is what we must export and other things we must not export because somehow this is a betrayal of a trust.

The greatest danger of all this lies in the way in which these arguments re-enforce the anti-Americanism which is emerging as part of our cultural life. The economic arguments are half truths and not whole truths, but the emotional implications are the kind of thing that give me much concern. One of the great tragedies of the Viet Nam war is the legacy of anti-Americanism it has left, particularly with English-speaking Canadians. Had this misguided and most tragic military operation not taken place, there is no doubt in my mind that many Canadians would have felt much closer to their neighbour to the south than they do today. Indeed, it seems to me that the most extreme expressions of economic isolationism in Canada—and from this I must be emphatic in dissociating the member for Duvernay who is much too intelligent to take this position—come from people who oppose the Viet Nam war.

This conflict has brought a number of immigrants into Canada, in many cases motivated by high ideological reasons, and in other cases, simply motivated by a desire to escape the military draft. These immigrants are highly literate and assimilate very quickly into our cities and have a considerable impact on public opinion in Canada. In my opinion, however, it is most unfortunate that arguments concerning foreign ownership of Canadian industries, the export of non-renewable resources, and in the measures to maintain employment in our manufacturing sector, might be re-enforced with a latent emotional expression of hostility to the United States of America which arises from totally different reasons. This is a most dangerous combination.