

*Supply*

basis, but the government allowed these industries also to deteriorate. If the minister responsible were honest, he would confess that in spite of the steps the government has taken for the footwear industry, for instance, through retraining or early retirement programs, he has completely given up on its future survival. It has been clear for the past three or four weeks that this industry will disappear unless steps are taken to include leather shoes within the total quota system.

The minister's answer is overdue. In fact, 6,000 jobs have been lost, 15,000 workers are still worried today. I do not know how many questions I have put—often with the tacit support of some Liberal members who did not dare rise in this House—politely to a parliamentary secretary about what was going to happen. I think they have a responsibility to demand that the minister take action and ensure the survival of that industry. The same could happen in the textile industry, and a number of others. That is the kind of situation we are now facing, and we know thousands of young people are discouraged and worried because they have not yet found a place in the labour market. How can we ensure this country's future with such gigantic failure?

Mr. Speaker, I know other members want to speak on the issue. But I think the time has come to ask members opposite, be they from Quebec or elsewhere, to stop that hypocrisy. Let us demand, as those members have a responsibility to do, that ministers and especially the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen) change course. As I said, Mr. Speaker, the damage is done. No political group in 24 hours could correct the damage done by this government over the last 15 years. It would have been possible as late as two years ago to avoid the worst. This government failed to respond to the direction and proposals we set and which would have proved very valuable to save this country from catastrophe. This government is the main culprit, because of its lack of management and vision, its stubborn determination to take the place of private industry and deceive Canadians into believing that fighting inflation will reduce unemployment. I have been hearing that same old cliché for 15 years but we now have both unemployment and inflation. This is utter failure. I will never insist enough on this point.

Today the Minister of Finance gave us another proof he has no compunction about his gigantic failure. He did not even give a hint he will change course or philosophy. And those hon. members opposite keep absolving and supporting him. In my view those people have responsibilities and should in the circumstances, prevail upon the government to change its attitude. We, the official opposition, are convinced, as thousands other Canadians are that this government erred, this government led the country into the doldrums, because thousands of people now suffer and beg this government to show leadership and alter its policies.

Clearly, Mr. Speaker, the present government will rely on the same philosophy to lead the country out of the doldrums. It will fail. My submission may be pessimistic, my colleagues opposite may say I am being too gloomy. This may not be too encouraging to the thousands of Canadians who are listening, but unless the Minister of Finance completely changes his

philosophy, the unemployment rate will increase further. And it is my belief that my warning will prove true in the short term. This government led us and keeps leading us astray but apparently does not give a hoot about the thousands of Canadians facing problems because of the current economic situation. Relations between provinces should resume, and at once. Enough stubbornness. Certainly, they will say this comes under provincial, not Canadian or federal jurisdiction. But in my view, men and women should rise to the challenge and re-open negotiations. That at any rate could prove beneficial for the Canadian people as a whole. Despite suggestions of politicking from all parties, I feel we have a responsibility to brace up and together with our provincial partners try to find a way out. But as long as the Minister of Finance—although he indicated this morning, that if he thought this could help the country, he would be prepared to resign. One of the services he could render this country, if he does not want to change his philosophy is to resign, and the sooner the better. He has proved his incompetence and mismanagement. We have here, before us, and especially from my province, 74 out of 75 hon. members who are in cahoots with so inefficient an administration, and are lacking courage under the circumstances.

• (1520)

I dare hope, once again, that the few remarks we are making today on our side of the House will bring this government to reflect seriously upon the hardships and the wrongs it is now inflicting upon the Canadian people, and upon the discouragement that will ensue every day with regard to the future of Canada. The fact remains that the present government is responsible, not so much to exercise power, but to ensure greater wellbeing for Canadians; but it has proved that it is incapable of doing so, for a long time now, and of achieving what this illustrious Prime Minister had promised: a just society. He is now left with two choices: either to change his economic philosophy that does not fit the situation, or simply, honestly, recognize his incompetence, his inability and resign, giving others a chance to do better.

[English]

**Hon. John Roberts (Minister of the Environment and Minister of State for Science and Technology):** We have been treated this afternoon, Mr. Speaker—and particularly by the hon. gentleman who has just spoken—to a great deal of indignation and emotion. I suppose indignation is the professional responsibility of the opposition—a great deal of heat with very little light. When I listened to the hon. member for Joliette (Mr. La Salle), I thought for a moment that he had joined the New Democratic Party. He was showing such a self-righteous concern that only he had compassion for those who are unemployed and those who are suffering from our economy. I thought he has verily established his qualifications for joining those who are self-righteous in the ranks of the New Democratic Party.

The question is not self-righteousness, Mr. Speaker. I can assure you and I can assure all members of the House that the