

Labour Adjustment Benefits

in the view of all members of the committee, Mr. Speaker, because it allows the joint planning committee not only to deal with the question of looking for ways in which to cushion the shock of unemployment, but also to look at programs which could obviate the necessity of lay-offs in the first place. That was a good advance and it was carried by the committee unanimously.

We are also pleased that the minister is bringing forward the suggestion made by my friend from Montreal that we should include the CPP deductibility in terms of the calculation. That is a good change. I could go on with two or three others, Mr. Speaker, but what we wanted to say is clearly this. The government's efforts in this bill, which is essentially an early retirement bill, are welcomed by those of us in this party because we recognize the government is trying to take its first—however small and timed—step into a field which is going to be very important for technological change and its consequences, which takes us into the twenty-first century.

I spent a considerable part of my remarks on second reading of this bill, Mr. Speaker, chastising the government for not understanding it. I would like to change that in one connection. The Minister of Labour understands it but I am not so sure—all right, I will be kind. Clearly, though, the Minister of Labour demonstrated in committee that he understands what he is about. We wish the bill could have provided bigger and broader benefits for more people, but to reject the bill on the basis that it does not do everything you want is, I think, irresponsible. So, speaking for my party, Mr. Speaker, we will be supporting the bill.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, I have listened with a good deal of interest to the hon. member for Rosedale (Mr. Crombie), and the reason his party proposes to support this bill is that it is a small step in the right direction. Mr. Speaker, this country is facing tremendous problems. We have over a million unemployed; thousands of jobs in Ontario and Quebec, the manufacturing heartland of this country, are being lost every week. Instead of a modern antibiotic to deal with the epidemic, the government proposes to use a small mustard plaster.

Almost half of our one million unemployed, Mr. Speaker, are people between the ages of 15 and 24. What makes the situation serious is that unemployment is no longer confined, as it was for so many years, to the traditional slow growth areas of Canada such as Atlantic Canada and eastern Quebec where, unfortunately, people have become used to having large scale unemployment for years. It now cuts a wide swath right across our manufacturing industry. In the last year we have lost 240,000 jobs, and, according to the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, in the next six months we are going to lose 100,000 to 150,000 more jobs. Does the government have any employment policy? If they have, they certainly have not shown it to us.

I am sorry the hon. member for Laurier (Mr. Berger) is leaving because just a couple of days ago the Minister of State

for Economic Development made a speech in Victoria and it was recorded in *The Globe and Mail* as follows: "Ottawa is going to stop propping up manufacturing industries that have not been able to make a go of it". Then he went on to illustrate the kind of industry he meant: Textiles, clothing, footwear and a number of others. There are probably 300,000 workers in those industries, most of them in Ontario and Quebec, so the minister joins some of the theorists working for the Economic Council of Canada in saying that those industries have to go, but he does not give any indication at all that the government has devised any plans for alternate work for those people. Many of those workers live and work in one-industry towns in which industry closures will mean economic suicide.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we have already seen the beginning of this. The Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Gray) announced new quotas for the footwear industry, which means it will go the way of our radio and television industry. What we have is a government which has adopted, quietly and without admitting it, Reaganomics. The most important problem in their view is to deal with inflation, and the way to do that is to keep interest rates high. The fact that we have had that for five or six years and we have restricted the money supply, and all we have had is higher inflation and more unemployment, has not cut any ice with the government. So they will continue these policies. Dealing with inflation is more important to them than trying to do something about unemployment. They will keep interest rates high and keep government expenditures down, and that, Mr. Speaker, is precisely what President Reagan is doing in the United States.

So we have that policy from the Liberal government, and what do we hear from the Conservatives? Well, here is the finance critic for that party, the hon. member for Etobicoke Centre (Mr. Wilson), making a speech in Toronto a couple of days ago where he said he supports the economic policies in the United States such as free enterprise, a greater reliance on the private sector and government cutbacks. These are important programs, he says, and the Conservative Party should be following them. It is something we would do, he says, if we were the government. Well, Mr. Speaker, let me just put on the record a couple of paragraphs about what Reaganomics has done to the United States. We know that it means they have more unemployed in the United States than they have had since the Great Depression. We know President Reagan has predicted a \$90-billion deficit. What we have not talked so much about is what his cutbacks in social programs means to the American people. According to a study by the North Carolina Senior Citizens Federation:

—reduced aid to the elderly will result in "hundreds of deaths, and thousands of people suffering severe hardship, and irreparable physical or mental damage." This is because, under President Reagan, the federal government is renegeing on many decades-old commitments to older Americans and because the budget cuts destroy or weaken the so-called safety-net programs critical to their very lives: social security, medicaid, food stamps, housing, energy assistance, and social services. Indeed, these cuts mean—together with the termination of the Community Services Administration—that there is no "safety-net" and no guarantee that the needs of 6 million elderly poor will be met.