

Employment Support Bill

approach to both domestic and foreign news, rated Canada's importance in the upheaval as worth only five inches of space at the bottom of page 42. Shows the dimension of the Canadian fact as it exists in the United States.

If any punctuation was lacking, President Nixon added it in a press conference on Sept. 16 when he said,—

I just alluded to this, but I will continue with the reading of the quote. I think this editorial speaks on behalf of a lot of Canadians.

—“After the Japanese were here I found that, both from the information they gave and the information we had ourselves, that Japan is our biggest customer in the world and we are their biggest customer in the world.”

That statement didn't happen to be true on either count. In the first six months of 1971 the United States exported \$2.1-billion worth of goods to Japan and \$5.2-billion to Canada. In the same six months the United States imported \$5.9-billion worth of goods from Japan, and \$6.01-billion from Canada. Even on combined export-import dealings the U.S.-Canada package is far greater than the U.S.-Japan package:—

I am trying to tell the minister that something is wrong. Unless the President is misquoted in the statement that he believes Japan is their greatest trading partner, I think this editorial is true. This is the unknown country. The government should work hard through this minister who is going to the United States this evening to create an impression on the President of the United States, one which will be heard by the United States.

Members on this side have questioned the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) as to why he does not pick up the phone. Perhaps in my ignorance, not knowing the protocol in this matter, I thought the telephone was a means of prime communication. In view of the disastrous effects of the United States' attempt to satisfy their own demands, I suggest that the Prime Minister of Canada—I do not know whether he has ever talked to the President of the United States; I suggest he must have—should find the situation important enough to pick up the telephone and say to the President that in view of our extended boundary, unguarded, and the action we took in unpegging the dollar, which does not call for retaliatory methods against us which may bring us to the point of disaster. “As a result of our common language and trading patterns, Mr. President, what are you doing to us? We understand you must help your country, but what are you doing to us?”

• (5:30 p.m.)

That is all the opposition is asking, and for the life of me I cannot understand why the Prime Minister does not take this step. Perhaps I am uninformed and do not appreciate the protocol involved in this matter, or perhaps the Prime Minister may think that he is above and beyond picking up the telephone to call the President of the United States; I do not know.

Mr. O'Connell: Has the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) done that?

Mr. Alexander: He is not in a position to pick up the telephone and call the President of the United States. This government continues in its arrogant way, with its complacent attitude and its apathy. But I must not digress because hon. members are eating up my time. It is nice to see members on the other side getting involved in this debate. Sometimes we get such asinine comments from

[Mr. Alexander.]

them that I wonder whether they send their copies of *Hansard* home or burn them in shame.

Mr. Muir: Especially the buffoon from Calgary South (Mr. Mahoney).

Mr. Alexander: I did not say that.

Mr. Muir: I am saying it.

Mr. Speaker: Order. As the hon. member for Hamilton West (Mr. Alexander) says, his time is limited. Perhaps we should give him a chance to continue his remarks.

Mr. Alexander: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. But how can one become unexcited and be impassionate with interruptions of that calibre? In the cut and thrust of debate, when you are challenged you must reply.

I do not pretend to be an expert on this bill, as those on the government side do, but I want to put before the government a few of the concerns that have been expressed in this House. With the mandate that we have collectively on this side of the House, we have every right to bring them to your attention, Mr. Speaker. There is no desire on our part to hold up the bill; we just want to point out its inequities.

The title of this bill is “An act to support employment in Canada by mitigating the disruptive effect on Canadian industry of the imposition of foreign import surtaxes or other actions of a like effect”. I think it should be extended to read “and as a result of inefficient government fiscal and monetary policy”. That has been underplayed, or left out, but in fact how can one criticize the bill to any great extent? Obviously, we are in a position where it is necessary to give some relief. But what we are talking about here are the consequences which flow from U.S. policies that affect our daily life; no reference is made to the fiscal and monetary policies of this government that have left industry in an awful mess.

I have watched the legislation go through this House and it seems to me that the free enterprise system no longer means anything. Perhaps to some hon. members it does, but in view of what the government has done in restricting the means and methods whereby we can reach high production, and therefore in the long run have full employment, whatever that may mean—perhaps 3 per cent unemployment—I wonder where we are going.

I appreciate the concern of the hon. member for Kent-Essex (Mr. Danforth). I know the minister attempted to allay his fears, but from my first reading of the bill I get the impression that it is similar to providing corporate welfare, and perhaps it should be administered under the direction and leadership of the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Munro).

It seems to me that the giants of industry certainly will need help and deserve help, and that is one thing. On the other hand, there are countless industries in Hamilton that feed these giants and do not export, and they will be directly affected by this surtax. After all, we are only providing assistance up to about two-thirds of the surtax that would be paid, which in the long run means that somebody is going to be short. As a result, companies are going to lose contracts, their workers are going to be faced with unemployment, which in turn means that those