

Naturally, the union movement as we know it today is another cause of the problem we are now witnessing in Canada. I am all for unions, but I am absolutely astounded to see some leaders use their unions as a tool not to build, not only to fight for the rights of the workers, but to change all sorts of things in our society which do not always better the fate of the workers, their families and the people as a whole. That is one of the reasons why many businesses in Canada do not want to expand at this time despite the incentives offered by the various governments. There are so many problems on every side, so many complications. Someone says: Let us set up a program to create jobs, to help public organizations give services to municipalities, to the people. On the other hand, we see a proliferation of rules, laws and requirements which prevent the implementation of those programs. And the bickering starts. On the one hand, there are inspectors who check on the people who work; and on the other, people are penalized when they work.

I could see that again in my constituency during the weekend. It is discouraging to see how public affairs are administered to annoy people, to make them quarrel. The Unemployment Insurance Act in its present form has bad aspects. The previous time it was amended, through Bill C-27, it was worsened instead of being improved. I recall that at the time I took part in the debate, and I said in the House that the amendments we were introducing were not likely to improve the conditions of the workers or to create jobs. The act in its present form, does not please everyone, of course. Earlier I heard the hon. member for Charlevoix (Mr. Lapointe) who wanted to express his views on this bill—

An hon. Member: Where is he now?

Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse): I think he was right when he said that this piece of legislation would be acceptable if it were applied only in centres where manpower is being trained, where the unemployment level is very low. But in rural and underdeveloped areas, where industries do not settle but where there is plenty of manpower, this legislation will create more problems than it will solve.

The hon. member said that the 23 per cent figure as we know it is not correct. He is the one who quoted this figure earlier when he mentioned that in his riding 42 per cent of the labour force is unemployed. If he quoted that figure, I suppose he analyzed it first and I am convinced that he did not exaggerate. In my area, it is the director of the manpower centre who conducted an analysis and a review of the situation, and who stated at a certain point that 25 per cent of the labour force in that area was unemployed.

Mr. Speaker, I have other things to add, but I would like to point out that it is ten o'clock.

Adjournment Debate

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

● (2152)

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 40 deemed to have been moved.

AGRICULTURE—REQUEST THAT BEEF IMPORT QUOTAS WILL NOT BE INCREASED

Mr. Bert Hargrave (Medicine Hat): Mr. Speaker, my remarks tonight have to do with two questions I addressed to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Allmand) and to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) on November 27. They were related to a beef industry seminar which was held in Regina on November 22 and 23, and at which the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs was the after lunch speaker.

This two-day seminar was sponsored by the Canadian Cattlemen's Association and the Meat Packers Council of Canada. It was an excellent conference, the first of its kind in some five years. Discussion was focused on four main subjects—consumption, production, marketing, and government. It was significant that the opening session dealt with consumers, and their representatives were very much involved throughout the entire two-day meetings, especially Mrs. Yvonne Miles, president of the Canadian Association of Consumers.

I suggest that the minister's remarks to the seminar were abrupt and abrasive. I suggest to him that the public at large is well aware of the extreme difficulties from which the Canadian cattle industry has just emerged after three or four years of operation at or below cost of production. This applies to all sections of the industry, but particularly to the cow-calf, grass yearling and feedlot sectors. Just a courteous reference by the minister in his speech to this background would have been both appropriate and appreciated.

His two personal assistants attended the meeting and could have properly briefed the minister. Certainly, he was invited to speak as the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, but he might at least have been more aware of his audience and of the people they represented. They represent a \$2 billion industry, the largest agricultural commodity group in Canada. Instead, the minister called for a conference of all sectors of the beef chain to establish a dialogue for decision. That is precisely what that meeting was. It was the first time in five years we got around to doing that on our own.

● (2202)

He told us to rationalize our operation and improve efficiency. Where was he in the terrible western drought year of 1977, the worst since the 1930s, and during last winter's blizzards which killed thousands of cattle?

Then he proposed floor and ceiling prices for live cattle and opening up our beef import quotas, this to protect consumers.