

*Labour Adjustment Benefits*

should not be investigated? Those are some of the concerns that came forward.

I want to talk for a moment about the representations made by the trucking association. I asked them about their hours of work. I realized they could not answer in hours per day or hours per week, but surely to goodness an industry as large as that serving all of Canada should be able to identify a monthly scale. I was told by representatives of the trucking industry that truckers could work as much as 260 hours a month and that they could ask for extensions on top of that. The railways are doing a similar thing. Workers are required to work 11 hours a day and yet we have over one million people unemployed. At the same time industries are allowed under the Labour Code to let workers work excessive hours. If the Minister of Labour is really concerned about employment and if he really wants to do something humanitarian, he should meet with companies and unions to find a way to solve this dilemma. Workers should be working hours of work that are in the 1980s, not those worked in the 1890s.

That is something productive that could happen. In my riding of Kootenay East-Revelstoke, 200 IWA workers were laid off in the Canadian forest industry by Crows Nest Forest Products Ltd. Right next door construction is going on by Crows Nest Resources. Do you think that the parent company has made an attempt to give the long-term employees an opportunity to work within the resource sector of the company? To this date the unions, Canada Manpower, management and myself, as a Member of Parliament, have been calling upon the parent company to try to relocate lumber workers in the mining areas. They are qualified to run machinery. I am sure they are qualified to carry on those kinds of jobs. But what is the Minister of Labour doing? He is bringing in amendments to the Canada Labour Code and bringing forward extensions to the Unemployment Insurance Act which will provide mobility for people to move from province to province. But what about people in a province who have homes, are unemployed and looking for work? They want work, not benefits. That is the message we were getting loud and clear from the various groups.

The steelworkers talked about Uranium City and its problem. Before Christmas our members in Uranium City were told without prior indication or warning that Eldorado Limited would be permanently closing its Beaverlodge mining operations as of June, 1982. For the work force of 850 this meant that their jobs, homes and the whole community would be written off. Not only was there no prior indication of the shut-down, but some 45 new miners and their families had just moved into Uranium City and were still in a company orientation program. Those kinds of things are going on. We are not having the kind of consultation that should occur in order to ensure that we have an industrial strategy which will keep workers employed in the future.

The union together with the community have asked for full corporate disclosure of all information and data relevant to the decision by the company to shut down its operations. On the basis of his public statement, the president of Eldorado is

apparently of the view that his simple figures of \$60 in production costs and \$25 in current quoted prices per pound of product is sufficient information for the people. Anything more can wait for the publication of the company's annual report. We on this side do not feel that is sufficient.

The Sydney steel mill, Sysco, has suffered chronic problems ever since it was abandoned by Dosco in 1967, its previous irresponsible owners, and the mill has suffered long-term job losses as well as short-term lay-offs and recalls. Part of the reason has been loss of markets and part technical change. The government is well aware of the problems of Sydney steel. It has been aware of them. It knows about the expenditures that must be made. But the government is now coming in with patchwork policies to try to cover up for the mistakes it has been making over and over again.

● (1720)

With regard to the railways, it seemed odd to me that the government would be bringing about the same kind of talks as the trade unions, management groups and workers; but the conclusions of The Railway Association of Canada were that it understands the conflicting recommendations made to legislators as they attempt to maintain realistic labour standards. Legislated improvements which are not the result of real productivity improvements, however, will come at the expense of the employees. Rather than benefit the terminated employee, the proposed Labour Adjustment Benefits Act may ultimately lead to further erosion of the employees's wellbeing. The Railway Association goes on:

It is for these reasons that The Railway Association of Canada remains convinced that the proper role for government is to create an economic environment where business can grow and prosper.

That was typical of the comments of virtually every delegation which came before us.

There was one personal representative from Sept-Îles. It was a pathetic thing to see that worker come before the committee and talk about the unemployment there, the loss of homes, and the attitude of the government in offering them programs such as this which are only stop-gap measures against a very serious unemployment problem. The Canadian Labour Congress offered some adjustment programs which put forward the following points, and I think the minister should take a look at them. They said:

One year advance notice of plant closures and major lay-offs and six months for lay-offs of less than 50 employees.

Is that so much to ask for on a major shutdown?

Major lay-offs and plant closures must be justified in hearings before a job protection board. A single member board, appointed by the government after consultation with the parties affected, would have powers under the Inquiries Act to examine the reasons for the full or partial closure.

Is that too much to ask? Surely to goodness, when people have worked long hours and years for a company, it is not too much to ask a board under the Inquiries Act to examine the reasons. The next recommendation reads:

Compensation payments to communities affected by lay-offs payable out of a special fund financed through employer contributions. The job protection board would make recommendations concerning payments out of the community