

Employment Support Bill

of his own industrial complex. There is much discussion in Canada about the need to manufacture all our raw materials into finished products before sending them out of the country. Every country aims for this desirable goal, but this desirable goal is not always available. Many years ago the Canadian milling industry had a large flour export market but as the economy of the importing countries developed, both those highly industrialized and those developing, they wished to grind the imported wheat into flour. That is one thing that even an underdeveloped country could do quite easily, so the Canadian export flour market diminished.

It is not always possible to export only manufactured products and to process all raw materials at home. Today we had an interesting comment from the hon. member for Duvernay (Mr. Kierans) who suggested that if we kept our raw material and non-renewable resources at home we would be much better off. But trade is a two-way street. I do not pretend to be an expert in the mining field, but it seems to me that the electrothermal generating units of Ontario and southern Quebec are fuelled with American coal and that the great aluminum plants of Canada largely obtain the raw material from outside these borders. There are many other examples.

Whether retaining non-renewable resources in all forms in Canada is advisable seems very much a matter of debate. The laborious efforts to take down the trade barriers in the last 30 years should not be lightly cast aside. I believe the government should have used more imaginative and effective ways of dealing with this immediate problem of the effect of the surtax on our exports.

[Translation]

Mr. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, I would like to make some comments on the bill now under consideration to support employment in Canada. It was introduced this week to cope with the problems experienced in Canada and throughout the world.

In order to justify some of my comments it is also essential at the beginning to make a review of the past months. We all objectively acknowledge that from several points of view, conditions are difficult. The economy is disabled not only in Canada but everywhere else in the world.

I must say, at any rate, that the results of the policy applied over the past two or three years have certainly not been as brilliant as was anticipated. We had thought of correcting the situation but we realize that this is difficult. The recent United States government announcement has made things even more difficult for the Canadian government.

I must also recognize that the government has made some commendable efforts. For instance, the Department of Regional Economic Expansion has injected capital throughout the country in order to create new jobs, but at the same time we have been unable to prevent industries from closing down.

We also recognize that at the present time unemployment is still the major evil in our country.

[Mr. Ritchie.]

It might be mean to blame the government for all those evils, or not to acknowledge that the present difficulties do not exist only in Canada but in practically all countries.

I think that to do nothing more than to criticize the endeavours of the government without suggesting valid solutions would be playing politics.

● (9:00 p.m.)

As I am well aware that such problems are not peculiar to Canada, I have to acknowledge that the uneasiness which has now spread through this country is pretty general. I feel that, as leaders, we have a responsibility to act with greater objectivity rather than be prepared only to criticize without suggesting ways of coping with the present situation.

I have heard several speeches and I know that, in the course of the debate, the opposition takes a particular delight in blaming the government for all the evils from which Canada is now suffering.

I would like to take this opportunity to urge all members to show the objectivity which all Canadians need. I feel that it is their duty to analyze the bill which is now under consideration. I am even more convinced that due to the difficulties we are experiencing at this time, we must do it with greater objectivity than we have up until now.

Is the bill we are considering of such a nature that it will correct the situation? Very few members can answer that. As far as I am concerned, I cannot do it. However, we must admit that the government is trying to correct the disruptive effects of the American decision by earmarking \$80 million to that end.

It is difficult to say whether all sectors affected by this surtax of 10 per cent will have the guarantee of adequate assistance. I know that some sectors, such as agriculture, are surely not to be neglected. Nevertheless, I believe we must be honest enough to admit that Bill C-176 was, to a certain extent, likely to bring some improvements.

Those who are presently condemning the government for not having done anything may be the same who have tried to delay the passing of the bill, so that it remains at the third reading stage.

I feel that they perhaps lack objectivity. Who could boast that he has the solution to present problems? About this, I should like to say that it would be appropriate to agree on one idea, not to save this government, but to protect the Canadian people, who need legislation to ensure their well-being.

One might say that the passing of legislations against unemployment has often enough been recommended. Since the deception which has followed the passing of legislation introduced over the past three years, I was perhaps justified in asking for, some years ago, and even last year again, a summit meeting where I would have liked to see all the economists, industrialists and officials of various important Canadian agencies, in order to have discussions with the government and to attempt to find a solution.