

we have got rid of the big car and drive a Volkswagen most of the time. The attitude appears to be that when immediate problems become apparent only the auto manufacturers are in a position to tell us what types of pollutants are offensive, and how to control these noxious gases and substances. I do not think this should happen.

After all, large sums of money have been devoted to research in universities and elsewhere, and we should be able to develop our own machinery on the basis of scientific papers put out by the universities. This should place us in the same position as the companies, from the point of view of developing new products. I do not think we have done this, though it is clearly in line with our responsibilities, and I say this on the basis of reports we are getting from the department. I say we are not ahead of the developments in this field. We are always following, we are always behind, and the reports I read are so cautious and bureaucratic that they really do not say very much.

It would not be a bad idea if the minister were to agree to this amendment. I do not think she is particularly wedded to this piece of legislation, although I am sure there are officials of her department who are wedded to it. I am sure she would agree that the field we have been discussing is an immensely important one. Moreover, it is a field which no one really knows much about. It is surely reasonable to ask that the subject matter be referred to a committee—I have no objection to passing the bill, as well. Somewhere along the line the subject of pollution and our ability to set acceptable standards for the purity of our water and air must receive 100 per cent of our attention.

As I call it four o'clock, I repeat that when young people write to me telling me they are unlikely to have any future because I am not doing anything about a particular problem which they are outlining to me, and about which their teachers have told them, I think it is time to do more than consider the technical or bureaucratic side of the bill before us. It is time to examine the whole proposition. May I call it four o'clock?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): It being four o'clock, the House will now proceed to private members' business as listed on today's order paper, namely, public bills, notices of motions and private bills.

Mr. Lefebvre: I think Your Honour will find there is general agreement to proceed with Bill No. C-218.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' PUBLIC BILLS

[English]

INDIAN-ESKIMO EMPLOYMENT AUTHORITY ACT

MEASURE TO COMBAT UNEMPLOYMENT AMONG NATIVE PEOPLES

Mr. Ian Watson (Laprairie) moved that Bill C-218, to provide for the establishment of an Indian-Eskimo Employment Authority, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

Indian-Eskimo Employment Authority

● (1600)

He said: Mr. Speaker, this bill proposes the establishment of an Indian-Eskimo employment authority in order to permit a more efficient attack to be made upon a problem of which members of the House are aware. I refer to the extremely high unemployment rate among adult Indian males, and to a lesser degree among adult Eskimo males.

The percentage of unemployment or underemployment has been in the 50 per cent range for as long as I have been in the House, which is almost 12 years now. I have a letter that I wrote in March of 1965 to the Hon. John Nicholson, the then minister of Indian affairs, in which I proposed at least a partial solution to this problem.

I suggested at that time that by bringing together representatives of the Indian people, industries active in the north, labour unions with members in the north, and the various governments and departments of government concerned with the employment of Indians, namely, the departments of Indian affairs, manpower and labour, it would be possible to expose them to some of the success stories of Indian employment in the north, which in turn would breed a better appreciation of the way in which industries in the north could absorb more of our Indian labour population.

It is ironic that in most of the major developments that have occurred in our northland, whether in the territories or in the northern sections of our provinces, 90 to 95 per cent of the people employed have been brought into the north from the south at great expense. They are kept there at astronomical cost to the companies involved, whereas often in the immediate vicinity there are numbers of unemployed Indians.

It seems to me, as it seemed to me at that time, that if somehow we were able to make company foremen and personnel managers aware of success stories of Indians being absorbed into northern industry, workers who stay on the job year after year, both to their advantage and to the advantage of the companies hiring them, this exposure would make other companies more willing to hire Indian labour for the great variety of opportunities that have been opening up in the north during the last 10 or 12 years but which, to a large extent, have not been filled by Indian people.

What was the result of the representation that I made, Mr. Speaker? There was a polite letter which I received in reply. I have been making representations to every single minister of Indian affairs since that time in regard to this matter. I have also made interventions in the House on at least eight or ten occasions. But we still have a 50 per cent unemployment rate among our Indian people. My suggestion is as valid now as it was then.

Since that time there has been a great deal of support for the idea. In 1969 the Indian affairs committee of this House made the following recommendation, which I should like to read into the record again so as to remind hon. members of it:

The Committee urges that regional conferences be held, bringing together all the elements capable of solving the unemployment problem. These include representatives of federal and provincial departments and agencies directly concerned, organized labour, industries