

economic planning, nor that Governments should participate in joint ventures. It feels that the market should take care of all that and it is quite willing to throw the boat building industry in Canada to the winds, to write it off. I find that unacceptable.

We note as well that the Government is not prepared to provide extra protection to the clothing industry, particularly that part dealing with woollen garments. Again, I question the wisdom of the Government. The garment industry has been an important industry in this country and has created and maintained incomes for many, many men and women over the years. The ability of a country to clothe itself is surely as important as the ability of a country to house itself and to feed itself. Therefore it is important that we maintain a viable garment industry in this country.

It would seem to be essential that if you asked the garment industry in this country to compete on the world markets, so to speak, to compete for the Canadian market on the same terms as foreign garment industries, that some extra assistance be provided to the Canadian garment industry. Are we expecting the Canadian garment industry to be able to compete on the same level as the garment industry from Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, et cetera? Are we asking those companies to compete with other companies that pay starvation wages? Are we then saying to our garment industry that if it wants to survive it had better start paying starvation wages to its workers, too? That surely does not make sense to anybody in this House. We have better wages in Canada than, let us say, Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong or Singapore. That means that our wage earners are in a better situation to pay the price, to buy those goods and services that they need. To withdraw the protection from our garment industry resulting in increased unemployment in this country at this particular time does not make much sense.

● (1550)

Over all, what is required is a thought-out policy and direction. It is required that the Government accept its responsibility. We need to have a Government that is willing to accept its responsibility as an economic leader and not to allow a laissez-faire attitude to prevail. We need to have a Government that is committed to an economic strategy. We need to have a Government that is willing to take some economic leadership by putting together a package that allows for the best conditions for our workers and our consumers.

We require a balanced approach and above all we require leadership on the part of the Government. Unfortunately, our Conservative friends do not believe in Government leadership. Therefore, they are not very good at putting together an economic strategy that will protect Canadian workers and consumers. I am afraid that with these folks across the way in Government, we are going to end up with Canadian consumers and workers being the losers and the multinational corporations the winners. The prize is the Canadian economy, our resources and our markets.

Customs Tariff

We will look at Bill C-71 more closely in committee. We hope that the Government at that time will be willing to answer our questions and our concerns.

Mr. George Baker (Gander-Twillingate): Mr. Speaker, I have just a few words to say on the introduction of this Bill. As the Parliamentary Secretary said when it was introduced, it covers items that were non-Budgetary and is more or less a clearing up of certain regulations and tariffs within the Department. When reading the items contained within the Bill, one wonders whether or not the Government is actually concerned about some of the items that are to be changed.

Two things come to mind when discussing with an ordinary person the customs tariffs and any changes that are made to that Department or its regulations. The first thing that comes to mind, as the Hon. Member pointed out a few moments ago, is the pending layoffs in the Department.

It is the policy of the Government of Canada not to fill jobs that become vacant and to cut down as much as possible in every single Government Department. I wonder how the regulations in the Customs Act will be enforced when the numbers of employees in that Department will be cut down to such an exaggeratedly small number.

The second thing that comes to mind is this: it is all well and good to amend the customs tariff and to bring in a Bill that reorganizes all of the regulations relating to the Customs Department by consolidating and amending it to meet present Government policy. This is done to facilitate the movement of goods and services between countries. When looking at some of the items listed in this Bill, one begins to realize that the Government has one attitude toward the movement of goods and services and other countries like the United States have a completely different attitude.

Supposing that there is not to be any tariff put on the importation of diesel boat engines or, as the Hon. Member pointed out, there is not to be a tariff on boats coming into this country, something which seriously affects the boatbuilding industry in Canada. The fact is that while the Government is doing these things, no reciprocal action is being taken by the Government of the United States or by any other Government.

What has the American Government done? It has slapped a tariff on saltfish, a tariff that affects the Prime Minister's riding, my riding and the ridings of all Atlantic Members. Then, through the Department of Commerce, the United States Government changed tariffs on raspberries, hogs, lumber and now fresh fish. In reply, the Government of Canada has indicated that there should be no tariffs on certain items coming into Canada that relate to the fishing industry. Clearly that does not make any sense at all.

Granted, the fishing industry is without a Minister of Fisheries and Oceans, but even if the Minister was still there, the fishing industry in Canada would still have some of the most serious problems of any industry in Canada, and certainly the problems facing it are greater than ever before. Provincial Governments and this Government always rationalized this by saying that a finished product cannot be produced by the