

and no teeth. Indeed, the foreign takeover bill that is now before a committee of this House is without sense.

According to reports I have read in the press, the only amendments the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Pepin) has introduced with respect to the foreign takeover bill have been those that the Canadian Manufacturers Association and the Chamber of Commerce have required. These amendments would raise the floor, so that more takeovers can take place or pass even that limping screening process which the government has proposed in that bill.

I, as the leader of my party, in common with other Members of Parliament and in common with the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield), travel across this country a good deal. I say to the government and to members of the House who are listening to me that I do not say these things with pleasure. My colleagues in my party are not asking me to say these things with any great glee or any degree of pleasure. I say them with sorrow, regret and pain. I say them when I travel across the country.

For a few days near the end of last week I travelled to the area represented by the President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen), who apparently will speak on behalf of the government later today. I have visited Cape Breton Island, the province of Nova Scotia and other parts of the country over the years and have found that exactly the same kind of problems beset the people of Nova Scotia and the people of the area which the minister represents. I find that in 1972 the condition of the people of Cape Breton is no better than when I visited the island in 1938. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, it is worse because in 1938 and for many years after that I spoke to audiences in Cape Breton and in the audiences there would be some young people. It is almost impossible to find young people today on Cape Breton Island, except those still going to school, because there is no opportunity for a young Canadian to build himself a life in that part of the country. The same is true of many other parts of Canada from coast to coast.

• (1600)

When one travels across this country one meets, as I did the other day in Vancouver, groups of old age pensioners who simply cannot live on what they receive from the old age pension, even if they should receive the total guaranteed income supplement. Many of them complain to me that because of the way in which the rules are written and applied it is difficult for them not to try to hide a few hundred or a few thousand dollars which they may have saved throughout a lifetime of work. If they expose this money as being theirs, they will be even worse off than they are now—and they are bad off as it is.

I ask myself, this Parliament and the people of Canada how these things occur. Why has this government failed so miserably and dismally in improving the conditions of the people of Canada? In endeavouring to carry out the first goal which I cited from the Throne Speech, why has this government failed in its essential purpose? It is because it has not ensured that its most precious resource, human talent, is not wasted away.

Why does this happen? Since I only have about five or six minutes left, I will give a brief answer. It is that this government is totally corporation oriented. No matter

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what piece of legislation it deals with, and no matter what area of activity it enters into, the first consideration of this government is the corporate sector of society and the handouts it can give to that sector. Every time you ask for an improvement in the quality of life for the people of Canada, there is no money available. However, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) has no hesitation in bringing down a budget in which he makes a \$500 million gift to the corporations of this country one year and \$700 million the second year. He has no hesitation in handing out hundreds of millions of dollars to the corporations, but every time one asks for an improvement in the quality of life of Canadians there is no money for it.

I have added up what this government gives to corporations. Including tax write-offs, tax holidays, depreciation write-offs and depletion allowances that it gives to corporations in this country, the government pays out every single year more than \$2 billion to corporations.

When speaking to the Social Development Council in the city of Quebec, the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Munro) had the nerve to say that we must have selectivity; we cannot have universality and we cannot improve the lot of the poor in Canada sufficiently, because if we try to do that the middle-class will have to carry the tax burden. The people—I use the word “people” in the legal sense—who ought to carry the tax burden in this country and who do not carry their fair share are the corporations. They get away with murder.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lewis: Forty-six per cent of the corporations in Canada—I am talking about large corporations—pay not a single, solitary penny in taxes. Poor Shell Oil, the large, poverty-stricken, penniless, multinational corporation, made \$250 million in profits over a period of five years and paid not a single, solitary cent in taxes to the federal treasury! Falconbridge Mines made a similar amount of money over a similar period and paid \$15 million in income tax to the federal treasury. That is a rate of about 7 per cent. Having done that, they received a \$4 million grant from the federal government.

This is the kind of situation the people of Canada face. This is the truth they have to be told. This government is corporation oriented. If the government would stop giving these handouts to the corporations of Canada, it would have the money to increase contributions to our needy people; it would have the money to cut income tax for those making less than \$10,000 a year. These people would spend every penny available to them and really make the economy hum by increasing the total aggregate demand.

It is a government, as it is a system, of corporate rip-off. It is a government whose party is financed by 95 corporations. I say to the corporations that they are smart; they are getting a good return for every one of the \$30,000 they give to the Liberal party.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lewis: This government is concentrating on the large private businesses of this country, letting them carry on and depending on them to provide the jobs, goodies and generosity which they have in their good hearts. I do