

*Employment Support Bill*

clear to other countries which might be concerned about this legislation that we do not have anything to hide. It will show that the government is laying its cards on the table, making information available and that we are not attempting to hide our operations in any way.

It is in the government's own interest to make information available to the public, certainly in terms of the government's negotiating position with other countries in the very difficult international situation that exists at the present time. All members of this House will want to do everything possible to ensure that Canada's interests are presented in a way which will result in a suitable and satisfactory solution for Canada to the problem which now exists.

With regard to the bill now before us for third reading, I have to again raise one of the points discussed during the second reading debate. I refer to the fact there is no real policy framework within which this bill has been devised and formulated. It has become abundantly clear from the minister's statements, lack of answers in some respects and lack of specific information on how this bill is going to operate that there is a large vacuum, an absence of policy on the part of the government. In fact, in many respects the government has no answers. It has never provided answers on where Canada is headed in the present difficult situation. I would acknowledge that the government had to do something in the present situation. In the absence of any alternative they had to adopt some emergency measures. It is quite clear that the actions taken by the United States in particular will have some impact on the Canadian economy. It is also clear that those actions are going to hurt various sectors of our economy.

● (4:10 p.m.)

I think it will be recognized within Canada that it is only natural and right that there should be some response by the Canadian government. I think that other governments in the world, particularly the United States government, recognize as well that they have to expect some counteraction by other countries such as Canada in response to the unilateral action announced by President Nixon on August 15.

I hope this bill will be of some assistance in the present difficult economic situation. For our own part, we are doubtful that it will be of any real benefit, that it will accomplish anything in terms of whatever objectives the government is trying to achieve. We have already made our points regarding why we feel these objectives, whatever they may be, will not be accomplished. If the bill is passed, receives royal assent and goes into operation, then we will have to wait and see what transpires. We hope that on the basis of the discretionary authority that the bill gives the government some useful programs will be developed. It seems to me very difficult to evolve any sort of meaningful program, whether in terms of this bill or any other possible measure, unless we have adequately defined national objectives and have determined just where Canada is going. Some change in the direction our policies are taking would seem to be indicated at this time.

Most members on this House would want to see steps taken by Canada to ensure that trade barriers are lowered in the world. Looking at the other side of the coin, they

also want to see that as few barriers as possible are erected. I am sure the government would have the support of all members in the House in any steps it took to ensure that trade barriers are lowered and kept lowered in the future.

It seems to me that the government has to consider the course of its policies regarding development in Canada. It must consider what direction this development policy is going to take. Are we going to adopt policies that will result in giving us a greater degree of control over our own affairs and destiny? Are we simply going to be subject to the whims of fortune—whatever they may be—on the economic national scene? What we have to keep in mind, whatever course of action we decide to take, is that the basic purpose of economic policy and developmental strategy is the building of a society within which we place a certain value on the welfare and wellbeing of human beings, a society to which Canadians are proud to belong, a society that has concern for others both within the context of the structure of the nation and within the context of the international community.

I should like to stress this last point for a moment because, in spite of our natural consideration for the national wellbeing of Canadians and the future of Canada, we have to keep in mind that Canadians live in an international community and that, by the very nature of our history, our wellbeing is tied up with international economic affairs. We must recognize that in effect this planet is becoming smaller, that we have to live with our neighbours in all parts of the world, and that the international community is becoming more closely linked together. In that context, we want to do everything possible on the international economic scene to reduce the power that is presently in the hands of very few nations, power that influences in a very fundamental way the course of affairs of many nations in the world. As is painfully obvious at the present time, many countries have very little ability to control their own economic and social destinies in face of action taken by other countries.

Since we gave this bill second reading, there have been further developments in the world economic scene. It is perfectly clear that the surcharge announced by President Nixon on August 15 is not temporary, that it is going to be in effect for some time. We will have to decide just how to deal with that situation, and must recognize that there will not be an early lifting of this import surcharge, contrary to what was said earlier by some United States officials. It is also clear that we will have to have a realignment of world currencies. This has become particularly obvious during the last few days. In addition, it is becoming obvious that, given the present situation, there will have to be some upward revaluation of the Canadian dollar. We must examine the implications of this, how it is going to affect various sectors of our economy and determine who is going to be hurt as a result.

We must also take note of the consequences of the economic policy which the government has been following over the last number of years. The fact is that the government's economic and tax policies, as we have known them in recent years, have been geared to the development of industries which primarily are engaged in the production of raw materials for export. This production requires large capital investment, which means there