

One must consider it a sad day when one hears an Hon. Member from the Government side doing his best to bail out the Government from one more ill-conceived scheme to rescue us from this economic dilemma. I listened with interest to the Hon. Member opposite and I know that he was serious when he said that it was because of the nation's concern about the level of inflation that the Government introduced the six and five program. However, I want to challenge a couple of points he raised. He said that the dropping of the inflation rate will give investors the needed incentive and encouragement to start to invest. I have also heard that when the interest rates come down to their present level, or maybe even a bit lower, that that too will give the automatic signal to Canada's investment community that the good life is ahead and it should start investing hard-earned money, and to the savers of Canada that they should start investing their savings.

I will venture a guess that there are very few investors today who are motivated enough to risk any of their hard earned savings in the present political and economic climate in Canada. However, if the interest rates come down another two or three percentage points, that confidence will still not be there. If inflation comes down two or three percentage points, for whatever reason, likely because we are in a depression, but regardless of the cause or reason, I do not think that will make a difference.

Recently, just in the last few weeks, I had occasion to speak to virtually every chamber of commerce in my constituency, every board of trade, every municipal council, large or small, and to informal gatherings of businessmen, again representing large corporations and small corner stores, virtually. I did not speak with one single individual who said that he or she was prepared to invest anything in this climate of uncertainty. Canadians have totally lost faith in the Government.

On the weekend the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Chrétien) was reported as saying that, yes, indeed, the Liberals are in a hopeless situation as a political Party and that the people of Canada are now prepared to turf them out. Of course they are. It does not take any genius to figure that out. One could walk down the street and ask any five people, and four of those five people will say that this political Party providing so-called leadership in Canada today has to go.

• (1700)

Until there is a dramatic change in policy on behalf of that Government, or the Government disappears, there will never be any investor confidence or consumer confidence occurring in our country, which is needed to get a real recovery under way.

Today we are dealing with Bill C-133. No matter how you describe this Bill, it is a Bill which breaks the contract that the public servants of Canada have had with the Government of Canada. Of these retired individuals there are 120,000 in the Public Service, 32,000 in the Canadian Armed Forces, 2,000 in the RCMP, and when you include those people who will be retiring in 1983 and 1984 and the surviving spouses who would

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receive benefits, we are identifying about 200,000 people in Canada. They have made their retirement plans, knowing what their incomes will be, based on their pension programs, and they have made personal plans, investment plans and so on, assisting their sons and daughters, their grandchildren in education, and planning holidays that are well deserved. They have made plans for their futures. All of a sudden, to have those future plans curtailed because the Government of Canada broke a contract—broke the clear understanding they had with the RCMP personnel and Armed Forces personnel—how can the people of Canada have any faith in a Government which is, by a motion in this House of Commons, going to break a contract?

Member after Member has stood up to say that they support the breaking of this contract, that they think this motion is in the best interests of Canadians. Do you know what that is doing to do to the confidence people had in this Government, that handful of people who are still hanging on by the skin of their teeth hoping for something positive so that they can believe in this Government? Some Members say they are happy to support Bill C-133, yet they know this breaks a contract. How can they still be happy? That assumes, then, that people let their eyes drift across the room and say, "We like to go with the people who believe in keeping their contracts."

I do not like to cast aspersions at my Progressive Conservative friends—on the weekend I was even called a Conservative by a certain editorialist. They are the people I remember distinctly voting on Bill C-124, under which they were prepared to break contracts with people who work in the CNR, knowing the people who work in the CPR, because of the similarities, in the Public Service, in the Armed Forces in the RCMP would be similarly affected. With a couple of exceptions, they voted for it. They said, "We, too, as the Official Opposition, want to break contracts with those hundreds of thousands of people who work for the federal Government". And we wonder why the people of Canada have lost faith in the Government, and have lost faith in the people in the Official Opposition.

I agree that when you carry out a popularity poll and when they ask, "Will the Conservatives win in the next election?" people in their rather meagre response say, "Well, they are presumably the Opposition, they probably will. We will support this in some respect". But when they think about it carefully and when it is presented to them that that Party, too, is prepared to break those contracts, how can Hon. Members continue to stand and say they support this Bill but did not support the other one?

I know that Members will be standing up when I sit down and they will be saying how they are prepared to support this Bill, but were prepared to break all those other contracts. I ask those Members, as a serious question, to explain to the people of Canada why they will break contracts with hundreds of thousands of federal employees but will not break this one—that they feel very strongly about this one. The point is, we