

A month ago I wrote to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce asking him a simple question. He is just as slothful as someone who has been a minister for 20 years, yet he has been a minister for just six months. He is as worn out and vacuous as if he had been there since 1963. He cannot even answer a letter from the official opposition critic of industry, trade and commerce saying whether briefings will be arranged or not. He cannot even reply and say I can have permission to see a brief which the Newfoundland government submitted. The hon. minister is too busy travelling. His boots were made for walking. Maybe his boots were made for crossing; I do not know what it was. He is not around enough to even do me the courtesy of answering a letter that was sent to him on October 25.

Mr. Pelletier: You get exactly what you deserve.

Mr. Crosbie: Go ahead and caterwaul.

Mr. Douglas (Bruce-Grey): Tell us about the crossing he has done.

Mr. Crosbie: I have not the time to tell this group what I would like to tell them. There is another problem which the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce should look at. I have here a letter from R. A. Beamish Stores, of Ottawa, dated November 21, and another letter dated November 3 from Woolworth's and the Retail Council. They ask the minister to make a decision on what the import situation is going to be in 1978 and the last half of 1978 with regard to textiles and clothing. The letter of November 3 points out that their buyers are already completing their buying for the fall of 1978 in textiles, hosiery and shirts. They are awaiting a decision by the minister's department that was promised them for the end of August. They are now told that the decision on these import quotas for next year will not be made at the end of 1977. The letter explains the problems it puts the whole retail clothing industry in because they do their buying nine months or a year ahead. Instead of giving them a decision on that, the minister is cavorting around Brussels, Geneva, or the fleshpots of Europe, wherever they might be.

Mrs. Campagnolo: Fleshpots?

Mr. Crosbie: I do not know if Geneva and Brussels are the fleshpots, but they are pots, anyway, in Europe. The November 21 letter from R. A. Beamish Stores states that commitments by retailers are made on many classifications of merchandises 9 to 12 months ahead of the required delivery, particularly with regard to offshore resources. They need to know what the rules are that are going to govern 1978.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but his allotted time has expired.

Mr. Crosbie: Is there unanimous consent—

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Crosbie: Are you sure?

Canadian Economy

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Crosbie: Are you positive?

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Crosbie: Why don't you get up on your feet and talk yourself?

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Don't you like a good show?

Some hon. Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): Order, please.

Mr. Max Saltsman (Waterloo-Cambridge): Mr. Speaker, I hate to interrupt the citizen participation group. However, I am very pleased to get the floor and to say a few words about the motion before us. It is very easy for members on this side, certainly those in my party, to support the opening paragraphs of this Creditiste motion, although the last paragraphs pose some difficulty. On the whole, it is an important motion for our consideration. One thing that strikes me about this particular motion is the extent to which it reflects a problem in Canada generally and in Quebec in particular. Over the years I have been impressed by hon. friends to my left. In many ways, they reflect a grassroots sentiment in the province of Quebec. I tend to listen very carefully to the kinds of grievances they raise in this House, for that reason.

It is an indication of how serious the situation is in Quebec, in terms of employment, and how important it is for us to deal with it within a national context. If we do not find some way of creating jobs in Quebec and dealing with this question of the labour-intensive industries, the clothing industry, the shoe industry, the furniture industry, then Quebec itself will find a way. It may not be language which is the chief grievance of the point on which confederation hinges. Rather, it may be the extent to which those who guide the national economy are able to create jobs, not only in the rest of Canada but in the province of Quebec, particularly at this time. If we fail to do that in this assembly, the Parti Québécois will promise it in Quebec.

● (1642)

What the Parti Québécois has to do is to make the case that unemployment in the province of Quebec arises because of the failure of the federal government. It may be noticed, that I am not as partisan as I usually try to be in terms of condemning the government for its failures, because the issue is more important than that. It is not the government which will be held responsible; it is the Parliament of Canada which will be blamed for failing to find ways of alleviating the unemployment being experienced in the province of Quebec.

A lot of that unemployment arises from the competition of imports. If we do not find some way of dealing with this matter here, we are, in effect, handing the Péquistes the kind of instrument they need when they go to the people of Quebec with their referendum. What they will say is, "The federal