

Employment Support Bill

be maintained. We are asked to consider that perhaps some of our commodities will retain the status quo in the market, but there is no guarantee. Australia and New Zealand were in the inner circle and found out what their prospects for trade were; they did something about it. They got concessions from the European Common Market. We asked the government what concessions we would get but we did not get an answer because there are no answers.

Then, we have the floating dollar and its terrible effect on some of the industries of this nation. The only solution that has been offered has been the parliamentary secretary saying, "Well, it is not hurting all industries; some industries that thought they were going to be hurt are not being hurt". Now, we have the surtax. Mr. Speaker, I have lived within 40 miles of the boundary of the United States all my life. I have done business, as have my friends and neighbours, with perhaps more Americans than Canadians. You do not get concessions from the Americans by going with hat in hand and saying, "You owe it to us". When dealing with Americans you deal with them as businessmen talking to businessmen.

Mr. Woolliams: Right.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Danforth: This government talks about freer trade. The Minister of Agriculture said that we are embarked on a policy of freer trade. Mr. Speaker, as the official opposition we have tried and tried to convince this government that the United States is not going to look after the welfare of our industry and our agriculture. That is our responsibility. When imports were coming in here that were destroying our vital industries, we went to the United States and said, "Look fellows, this is not cricket." The United States in that instance did exactly as it has done this time. We should learn that this is the way nations do business. When they are hurt they impose a surtax and do something about the situation. What happened when we were hurt by the importation of cheap American corn? The American producers knew they were in the wrong. Did we clamp a surtax on their importations into Canada? Mr. Speaker, we went down there and in return for their permission to put on a temporary surtax lasting 90 days, we traded off five concessions under GATT. We did that to get a 90-day reprieve. When the government of Canada acts like that, how can we expect to obtain anything by begging?

• (5:50 p.m.)

Mr. Woolliams: They look worried.

Mr. Danforth: There is another thing with which the primary producers of this country are really getting fed up. It is that this government has not only deliberately embarked on a policy of putting people out of work to curb inflation, but that it has also embarked on a policy that allows and encourages the importation of foodstuffs similar to those that are produced in Canada. The government has encouraged the importation of those foodstuffs from other nations in a deliberate attempt to force

[Mr. Danforth.]

prices down, because food prices are one of the major items reflected directly in the cost of living index. It was the government's considered opinion that by bringing cheap food into Canada, an action which crippled many segments of Canadian agriculture, they could solve the problem of high living costs. How they expect to resurrect this industry after irreparable damage has been done, I have no idea. That is just another example of the government reacting to a situation, and it bothers me, Mr. Speaker. After all, this government went to the people with its agricultural policies and suggested that not only did it know the problems, but it knew the answers as well. Those in this country making a living from agriculture soon learned that the government's policies were nothing but political expediency.

Mr. Woolliams: Pragmatism.

Mr. Danforth: And if the farming industry of this nation has to be sacrificed, has to be destroyed, in order to keep this group in power, that will be done without any reluctance whatsoever. They talk about Mr. Nixon's policy; yet since this group in power took office, more viable economic units of agriculture have gone into bankruptcy than ever before in the history of our country.

An hon. Member: That's Liberal generosity.

Mr. Danforth: These are not just small family farms that I am talking about; these are economic units in which hundreds of thousands of dollars have been invested. Many are run by businessmen who, if given a fair economic climate, could make a livelihood. Yet under this administration there is no chance of such an economic climate.

We are told that here we have a new measure which is designed to help the Canadian people. It contains no solution for this problem. It is another measure of political expediency, and this government is trying, with the taxpayers' money, to buy itself out of a difficulty. That is what we have here, Mr. Speaker. This is no well thought out measure. The government is merely making an attempt once more to buy itself out of a difficulty, in the same way as it used the \$100 million paid to western farmers. That money was used, not to sell grain, not to develop markets, not to establish research, but to buy the government out of the difficulties of the western dilemma. That is the sort of thing we have before us, and it is not good enough. This will not do. We hope, as a party, that when this bill goes to committee we can bring in the necessary amendments that will enable agriculture, small businesses and other segments of our economy, the fisheries, the forestry people and allied industries—as well as those that are hurt desperately, to qualify for assistance under the regulations. We hope we can enlarge the bill by amendment so that those industries may qualify for assistance, even under regulations established by this government. We have learned from bitter experience that when we pass a measure through the House, that is not the end of it. The government brings in regulations, and those regulations are a source of trouble. Many times there is difficulty with the administration or interpretation of regulations.