

Employment Support Bill

units or goods so stored will create tremendous pressures on local markets.

Mr. McCleave: We shall see a postponed glut.

Mr. Danforth: As my hon. friend says, we shall see a postponed glut. We are deliberately asking for more trouble because of direct government intervention in the affairs of the business community.

The business community is aware of something else. They know that under any program run by any government department, the assistance you obtain is not always the result of direct need or the fact that you are completely qualified for assistance. Too often it is a question of "Do you have the right person in the right department to catch the right ear at the right time?". I am afraid that under the regulations proposed for this particular measure, a tremendous opportunity will develop for the very companies which need it the least to make available to their subsidiaries the greatest amount of government money, whether these subsidiaries are Canadian owned or directed from outside the country.

• (4:00 p.m.)

There is one other factor which we should very seriously consider. We are bandying about this estimate of \$80 million. It was brought out in committee that the \$80 million is just a figment of someone's imagination. It was picked out of the air. It is an estimation of what might be expended if this measure is operative for six months. It could be \$80 million, but if this program runs for 12 months the figure could be \$160 million, \$200 million or \$250 million. No one has any idea of the amount of money involved. What we are doing is handing a piece of legislation to the government which they say will be of a permanent nature and will take care of any contingency that is now taking place or will take place in the foreseeable future. Parliament is granting the government a blank cheque. It can spend as much, wherever and whenever it wishes on whatever corporation meets its fancy at a particular time. This is what disturbs me. We are talking about \$80 million. Will that \$80 million be for the relief of industry or will \$25 million be for the out-of-pocket payments to the bureau which will be set up to administer it and \$45 million for industrial payments? These are the questions I wanted to bring before Your Honour. I am uneasy about this aspect of such a bill.

To recap, I do not feel that this measure is going to be the prime solution to this problem. From its very concept, the haste and manner in which the regulations will be drafted and the way the program is being set up, I do not think this measure can possibly perform the function which this government is relying upon it to perform. The \$80 million, \$150 million or \$200 million which we are talking about will not be spent on exports. In other words, we will not be accomplishing anything. We will not be increasing the gross national product, but we will be deliberately creating a glut. Is it not conceivable that either through a spinoff or in conjunction with these tremendous sums of money, we should develop an export outlet which could determine what markets we can service, even under this particular difficulty? We should not only be concerned about maintaining the present output of our industry, but increasing this output by export sales.

[Mr. Danforth.]

Other countries, such as Japan, West Germany and industrial countries whose production is the envy of the world, are not taking measures which will gradually encircle the country and cut down their industrial potential, but are exerting pressure to break out of the shell and increase their industries.

I have grave doubts about this measure. We always seem to take a negative attitude in the face of adversity, regardless of the direction from which it comes. The only exception in this case is the government has recognized that industry is facing a problem and it is trying to do something about it. Too often in the past we have seen the same thing happen and the government almost seemed oblivious to the problem. An agricultural section of Canada has faced a severe drought and almost complete crop loss. The catches are no longer there for our fishermen. As far as their business is concerned, they almost face extinction. I could cite many other examples in the past few years when nothing has been done. We talk about \$80 million. If one of our major purchasers of grain were delinquent in paying for 100 million or 200 million bushels of grain, as has happened in the past, the economic impact on the people is far greater than that of this surcharge, yet we would not be able to move.

My one great disappointment in connection with this bill is that the government in its wisdom has determined to completely eradicate any opportunity for the primary producers of this country to take advantage of its provisions. I refer to agriculture, fishing, the pulp and paper industry, the mineral industry, all those which produce primary products. According to the definition section of this bill, they are not eligible. We desperately tried to convince this government that they should be included, but the government determined they should not. This is very unfortunate. There is going to be a good deal of hardship. We must accept this measure because the government has offered no alternative. It may help 2,000 or 3,000 Canadians to maintain their employment, but as a solution to the problem before us I do not have any confidence in it whatsoever.

Mr. John Burton (Regina East): Mr. Speaker, I want to take note of the offers made by the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Howard) on behalf of the minister to make more information available to members and the public with regard to the operations of this bill once it has been enacted into law. I welcome this concession. It is in the interests of all from two points of view to take every possible step to make more information available on this piece of legislation.

First, we in Parliament are being asked to give what amounts to a blank cheque to the government. Without getting into the argument that took place on this subject yesterday, when legislation which provides for a wide area of discretion to the government is passed there is some obligation placed on the government to make as much information available to members as possible. Second, any steps that can be taken to make further information available to members of this House and the public will be in the government's own interest in terms of its negotiating position with other countries. This will strengthen the government's hand in terms of making it