

Employment Support Bill

The present situation proves we were right and we are still convinced—

Mr. Lambert (Bellechasse): This is true!

Mr. Godin:—that this rise in the interest rates is the main cause of inflation and other related problems in our country.

Indeed, the bill now under study is just a poultice on a wooden leg.

If there is still a little honesty in this government, more should be done. In order to help Canadian consumers to meet their needs, to build a healthy and stable economy, to maintain a strong domestic market, I think the government should take its responsibilities by regaining control of its credit first, and then by eliminating forever the 11 per cent tax on building materials and the 12 per cent excise tax on all products manufactured in Canada.

With its strong majority, this Liberal government can also introduce emergency legislation to solve the consumption problem in Canada. Under Bill C-262, we are about to subsidize U.S. consumption. Let us then complete the program with a legislation on Canadian consumption which will make grants available for Canadian products consumed in Canada.

[*English*]

Mr. John L. Skoberg (Moose Jaw): Mr. Speaker, I shall not be too long, which will be pleasant news to some hon. members opposite, but I think one should question where we are going in this nation and whether Canada can thrive or survive in the situation in which we find ourselves. We must ask ourselves whether or not we are prepared to do anything about it.

Canada is faced with the problem of trying to bring about greater employment and at the same time we are trying to apply stopgap measures which will have very little effect in the long run. It was pleasant to hear some of our colleagues at the NATO conference tell us about the employment picture in their countries. At the same time, it is disappointing for us to view the employment picture in Canada. When one listened to the NATO delegates this week one was made aware of the fact that there is practically no unemployment in their countries, while in Canada we have 6.5 per cent unemployment. One wonders where Canada is going and whether it can survive in these circumstances.

Surely, if we are to continue selling our heritage, our national resources, we should ask ourselves whether or not we will survive. We have to ask ourselves, when we are confronted with the surtax imposed by the United States, what the United States really thinks of Canada. When I look at the news items of the last two days I begin to wonder what would happen if the neo-Fascist racist who referred to the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) as the crypto-Communist from Canada became president of the United States.

If we are to survive, I suggest we should take action to protect our sovereignty and, in fact, to protect the people living in this nation. If we do not, it will be too late to find out why we have unemployment. It is rather ironic to look at the newspapers and see the headline "New York Speech—Tough Talking Sharp Lashes U.S. Surcharge".

The article appeared on September 21, 1971. I heartily agree with what the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp) said in his speech. I wish he would stand up in the House and be as forthright here as he was in New York. The article reads:

In one of the toughest speeches delivered in the U.S. by a Canadian minister in the post-war era, Mr. Sharp repeatedly attacked what he dubbed "the Nixon doctrine" as an abdication of U.S. leadership.

Further in the article he is quoted as follows:

"These proposed permanent protectionist measures call into doubt the basic assumptions of our trading relations with the United States and indeed of world trading arrangements generally," he said.

He suggested, while claiming not to accept, the premise that the U.S. "in narrow and shortsighted pursuit of its own interests has adopted a beggar-my-neighbour policy towards Canada".

At the same time, we are asked to pass a bill in the House which does little in effect to deal with unemployment in this country. It seems to me that if the government can refer to retaliatory measures against the U.S., they should say exactly what they are talking about. If there are regulations to be included in this bill, the government should tell the House of Commons what the regulations will be so that an intelligent vote can take place.

Many people may argue about nationalization so far as industries are concerned. So far as I am concerned, Canadians must safeguard, right now, their independence and their power of decision. So long as we are able to give out the type of money that we are talking about—namely, some \$80 million—to companies but have no safeguards and no power of decision as to how it will be spent, because the power of decision is not in this nation but, rather, in the boardrooms south of the border or elsewhere, how can we ask members of this House to support the bill when in reality the bill means that we have no control over the money? I suggest that the grants under this bill will bring no long-term benefits to the communities wherein industry is located. It is just a stopgap measure which means little in the long run.

In my opinion we should receive answers to certain questions. We should ask what the government intends to do to prevent taxpayers' money in the form of assistance from going out of the country. I should like to ask what assurances Canadians have that these grants will not be used by foreign-controlled industry to assist the buying out of the few Canadian-owned industries that remain. There is nothing to indicate that this will not be the case.

Another question that we must ask ourselves is whether the situation of lay-offs in Canada is not similar to what is happening in the United States. I refer to the "Labour News Headlines" referring to paper lay-offs. It reads:

A number of cities (in the U.S.) are making "paper lay-offs" of employees to rehire them with funds intended to provide jobs for the unemployed under the Emergency Employment Act, the nation's top manpower official disclosed (Thursday). Malcolm R. Lowell, Assistant Secretary of Labour, said that the administration was very concerned about these "paper lay-offs".

I suggest that we could be faced with exactly the same situation in Canada. We may have paper lay-offs in order that corporations and industry here may in effect get a piece of this pie of some \$80 million unless there is a regulation requiring them to disclose how the money will