

*Unpegging of Canadian Dollar*

was to be floated. It is quite evident that the Prime Minister must have picked up the idea from one of the countries in the far east which he visited during his tour.

He imposed it on the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson) in the same way as he did the white paper on taxation. It is freely reported around here and it is on everybody's lips that when the Minister of Finance discussed the white paper with the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and used the phrase "our white paper," the Prime Minister asked, "Whose white paper, Ben?" In other words, they are saddled with it. He is dictating to every member of this government, and every minister has to take the brunt of any criticism made of his department.

It was shameful this evening to watch the Minister of Communications (Mr. Kierans) stand up in this House and try to defend the Minister of Finance. I say it is shameful because not one member of the government tried to defend him. Granted, his position has been indefensible all along, but one would think they would have gone through the motions. It must have brought shame to the Minister of Finance to realize that a man whom none of his cabinet colleagues have supported rose this evening to try to support him.

The minister had much to say. He said that efforts will be made to assist those industries that are adversely affected. I wonder what effort has already been made to assist the lumber industry in the Maritimes, which has already lost thousands of dollars. The hon. member for Burnaby-Seymour (Mr. Perrault) has placed clearly on the record what this means to the fishing, lumber and mining industries of B.C. Everyone will agree that British Columbia is one of our greatest exporting provinces.

We have our problems in the east, too. The minister said that an effort should be made to help the Maritimes also. While the minister was quoting he left out some quotes from newspapers. He failed to quote an article which said that A. G. Rumbold, chairman of the Maritime Lumber Bureau, said that the Maritimes lumber industry is seriously threatened by large-scale lay-offs and eventual bankruptcy because of the move. He said the industry is already drained by lack of domestic construction and building projects as a result of the government's anti-inflationary efforts. He said that Maritimes exporters have overnight lost several hundred thousand dollars through contracts already shipped and

not paid for and contracts concluded but not yet shipped. I ask the minister, in his quest for more immediate action, what has he done in respect of this loss of hundreds of thousands of dollars to the Maritimes lumber industry?

When he was on his feet he had something to say about what opposition members said about the floating of the Canadian dollar, but he completely ignored the remarks of his own backbencher. It is unfortunate that the hon. member for Burnaby-Seymour has been continually ignored in this respect. I understand he has no other forum, because if he gives notice that he will bring this matter up for two minutes at his next caucus meeting, the caucus chairman will probably rule it out because it will be an annoyance to the Minister of Finance.

The minister and his government feel that they are doing a great thing. It is unfortunate that the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion (Mr. Marchand) cannot be here to support the move. I say "support" because I have correspondence in which he supports some of the things I have said about the development corporation which was recently established. Our only hope lies in the fact that they appointed a new chairman.

I have been more or less quiet on this matter because I think the new chairman will cure all the ills and mistakes that Mr. Fullerton left behind. It is unfortunate that the city of Ottawa is now saddled with this man. However, I would remind the minister, who thinks he is dealing fairly with the unemployed of this country, to look at the situation in Cape Breton. Since this Crown corporation took over, another 1,200 men have been taken off the payroll. All that this Crown corporation has accomplished in this area so far is to remove several million dollars from the economy of the town affected.

This government cares nothing for the unemployed. The fact that they have adopted a policy created to increase unemployment in this country, and have now come forward with this measure which will further increase unemployment confirms this opinion. The minister quoted Donald MacDonald, chairman of the Canadian Labour Congress, to the effect that unemployment need not rise as a result of the unpegging of the dollar. That is not a statement which the Minister of Finance can take pride in quoting in this House. Mr. MacDonald, President of the Canadian Labour Congress, did not in any