

*Labour Conditions*

point extremely important as it affects the life of workers and Canadian companies generally.

I listened carefully to the Minister of Environment (Mr. Marchand) who seems much more comfortable as Environment Minister than as Labour Minister. I can understand him very well as he spent, like he said, 23 years in the field of labour management relations and we can very well understand why he talked tonight with so much enthusiasm about a subject he knows so well.

However, I regret that the Minister of Labour (Mr. Munro) was not as eloquent, as straightforward and as clear as the Minister of the Environment. The Minister of Labour did not answer the question before the House tonight, the right of appeal of workers and companies concerning the anti-inflation act. The Minister of the Environment blamed us for fighting the anti-inflation program saying that we did not really wish to stop inflation.

Mr. Speaker, we do not object against the concept of an anti-inflation program, but rather the anti-inflation program of this government. Yet, the Minister of the Environment did not say anything about the causes of inflation. What is the use of talking about the consequences of inflation, of repeating that it has to come to an end, long and passionate speeches which not come to anything, we must truly put an end to inflation.

Nothing is said about what brought it to Canada. Yet, I do remember that within six years this very government has doubled the interest rate in this country and when one considers, for instance, the cost of family houses, one realizes pretty well that the cost of housing is part of inflation. But nothing is done about interest rates. Since the Anti-Inflation Board has started its operations, we have never heard its chairman or any of its member say that they were going to analyze, scrutinize, and if necessary condemn the financial institutions of this country. Not satisfied with plundering the poorest among Canadians, putting them on welfare or just giving them small jobs between two unemployment periods, now they want to fight the well to do through the Anti-Inflation Board.

● (2200)

Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate—and hon. members of the New Democratic Party are quite understandably alarmed by this situation that has been known for a few days—that the Anti-Inflation Board decisions be practically without appeal. If the government could tell us that this situation will last only one year, but we know perfectly well that this government does not want to be too specific about the period during which this Anti-Inflation Board will be in operation. Nor does it want to give us any assurance about the period during which there will be no appeal procedures in Canada.

And we also know very well when a socialist measure is introduced, for instance during the last world war when direct taxation was removed from the provinces and given to the federal government, supposedly as part of the war effort, it was never returned to them. And when one considers this legislation, one realizes that we have just removed the right to appeal in labour bargaining. Therefore, I am concerned about the fact that this government does not give us any guarantee as regards the period during which the appeal procedure will be suspended.

[Mr. Rondeau.]

Mr. Speaker, I regret that the Minister of Labour (Mr. Munro) has not been as specific as the Minister of Environment, who spoke frankly and said that this board's decisions were without appeal. One cannot argue about such a frank, clear, obvious and precise answer. Now, Mr. Speaker, in co-operation with my hon. friends, my hon. colleagues from the NDP, I deplore this situation but not for the same reasons as they do.

We have already begun to realize a few days ago, and tonight in particular, the dictatorial approach that the Anti-Inflation Board has taken and which will be worsening throughout Canada, leading the private sector and the working people to be held within the framework of this board's regulations, that will be made as required, at a moment's notice according to the whims of these hon. mandarins.

Today, we can therefore judge the first decisions of the Anti-Inflation Board. The chairman of the board, Mr. Pepin, said that the board will be strict, that it will be indulgent, that it will be inflexible, and that it will be flexible. In other words, we can expect anything from the board as concerns regulations and the day to day interpretation of these regulations. But the chairman forgot to say that the board would be useless to control inflation.

Mr. Speaker, we spoke against the anti-inflation legislation because, as Social Crediters, we are convinced that this legislation will be completely useless to control inflation, but will be very effective when it comes to creating problems for everyone. Why? Because the board has extraordinary and anti-democratic powers. The board is not a department. It is not accountable to the public like all hon. members of this House who have been elected by the population.

The population voted for representatives who had promised to control inflation and not for members of Parliament who will hide behind the socialistic decisions of the board. The powers and the immunity of the board are stronger than those of any department. The powers of the board are such that it can do anything. Indeed, its chairman said so: it will be strict, indulgent, inflexible and flexible, strict and inflexible. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, what will happen is that the board will be strict and inflexible towards the weak and private enterprise and indulgent and flexible towards the strong and especially finance which will not be touched by it. The board will pit the weak, those who have already been deprived of everything by governments, against private enterprise to create a favourable climate for the introduction of legislation which will be even more socialistic than at the present time.

Instead of trying to control finance which stifles private industry, wage earners and low income people, the board will pit low wage earners against private industry, creating the impression that if the economy is so bad in Canada, we must put the blame on private industry and not on finance. This habit of accusing private industry is well in line with the duties of the board. That is also in line with the attacks of the right hon. Prime Minister who stated recently that private industry no longer works in Canada.

The Trudeau government used every possible means to kill private industry and now, to finish it off, the Anti-Inflation Board will make it easier to run private industry