

forecasting is wrong, whether we are talking about growth, inflation or unemployment, this country will remain in serious difficulties.

I want to thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for giving this opportunity to me to put these few remarks before the House and before the people of Canada in order that they will know that they cannot trust this government.

Mr. John Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, I want to take the opportunity to make some comments about this particular bill, C-31. It is symptomatic of the kinds of reactions that we get from this government across the way to the most serious problem facing the country. In fact every single day we have example after example of lay-offs. We have examples of multi-national corporations in this country cutting back a work force and withdrawing a local office to the parent company's country. This bill seems to envisage the parameters for the limits to which this government can react to those kinds of serious problems.

We have just heard an explication of juggling budgetary figures and juggling supplementary estimates and estimates. In this bill we have the government again fiddling with figures and presenting figures to parliament and to the people which can in no way be comprehended. In terms of the problem that is faced people cannot understand how that particular kind of legislation affects it. I am most concerned. When listening to the hon. member for Hamilton West (Mr. Alexander) one would think that if there were a Conservative government things would be different. It ain't necessarily so. I always get upset about that. I have seen the Conservatives in the House in operation. They have splinters all over their posteriors when it comes to dealing with issues in the House.

In Ontario we have an example of a Conservative government and we have heard the chatterbox from Chatham tell it, D'Arcy McKeough, the treasurer. He thinks the greatest thing on wheels is those federal Liberals. He agrees with their budget. He agrees with their projections. He agrees with their inaction with respect to layoffs in the mining industry and any other manufacturing industry in this country. He agrees philosophically with Liberals that in effect the government ought not to interfere in the market place and that they should sit on the sidelines and let everything happen.

When I looked through Bill C-31 it is an example of the limits to which the government plays games with the Canadian people. Juggle a few millions here and few billions there. It gives the impression to the people of Canada that their problems are being dealt with. It is a kind of fiscal legerdemain where the government fools around with the figures and gives the picture that things are happening and will happen.

I always thought Canada was bounded by the limitations of the Nickel Belt riding. All hon. members tend to get the impression that the whole country, the whole world, rotates around their own particular riding and their own concerns. Nickel Belt is a marvellous riding. The hon. member for Ottawa-Carleton (Mrs. Jean Pigott) says it is a very lovely riding. She ought to know because she was there. Some

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disastrous action was taken recently by the major employers in the Sudbury basin. It was felt in a very real way. It was not the first time that a multinational mining company which dominates the economy of the region has laid off workers in the Sudbury basin. We became extremely concerned this time because the figures reached 3,400 which would result in spin off effects to the economy of the basin. We were loud and vehement in demanding immediate action from the federal and provincial governments with respect to those particular problems.

Since those lay-offs became effective on February 13 I took the opportunity to go to Newfoundland. I had no sooner arrived in Newfoundland than I was confronted with the spectre of the Alcan fluorspar mine closing in St. Lawrence. There is a situation where Alcan was saying to the people of Newfoundland, and to the people of St. Lawrence in particular, "We are closing here because we can purchase the fluorspar cheaper in Mexico. We can make a bigger profit in Mexico by purchasing the fluorspar there than by producing the fluorspar in St. Lawrence." They laid off 400 workers which was the whole work force in that community. These people had lived there for 40 years.

They always tell me about the capitalist risks but they never talk of the workers' risks. That graveyard in St. John's was filled with workers who had died prematurely from silicosis. There we had a company unilaterally deciding that they were pulling out and that they would buy their fluorspar from a company called Fluorspar Empresa de Mexico. This company happens to be owned by Noranda which is a well known company in this country.

The people in their helplessness tried to come to grips with the reality of that problem. They were paying their mortgages on their homes. They turned to the people who they had elected, their provincial and federal government representatives. They said, "What are we going to do?" They made suggestions, Mr. Speaker, and we raised those suggestions in this House. We said the least any self-respecting government ought to do was to impose an import tariff on fluorspar, temporary if you want, sir, and a percentage to make it more economical for Alcan to continue to take out fluorspar from St. Lawrence.

During the question period today I was amazed to hear the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Horner) tell this House that we cannot dictate to Chrysler Corporation. We cannot dictate to the multinational corporations in this country. If our governments which have a mandate from the people cannot dictate and set the behaviour pattern for the multinational corporations in this country, who the hell can?

● (1622)

Alcan, Inco, Falconbridge, Noranda, Granby mines and all the rest do not mind holding a pistol to the heads of their employees, telling them they are going to be laid off. They do not hesitate to dictate to the people. However, who is governing this country? Is it the boards of directors of Inco, Falcon-