

Alleged Failure to Improve Economy

Commission. Fifteen million dollars were spent and 556 persons were employed full time. Yet, that inquiry was given recently a first class funeral. Absolutely nothing has changed, in spite of the study that was made. It did not give one more cent to the taxpayers, but it has changed the policy.

Mr. Speaker, such a state of things is ridiculous and revolting. As a young man, I want to tell the government about my concern as to that multitude of young people who are told to get on education and then find themselves with all kinds of diplomas but unable to participate in the economic activity of this country.

Mr. Speaker, while they were studying they were told that they could, at the end of their studies, live in a happy and safe society. These young people are prepared to fight and to work for their country. They are quite ready to do their share. The only thing they are offered is a social security card, an unemployment insurance card. They are told: "Wait for your turn at the Canada Manpower centres."

The parents of those young people are told: "Wait for your turn at the Canada Manpower centre, you will be given retraining courses." Mr. Speaker, I am convinced that everybody sees, as I do, how we are mired in this illogical system, and how silly it all is.

It is high time that we put some order into this system. We do not say that those people are poor administrators but we say it is time for the government to adopt the same policy of credit or power restriction with regard to high finance and chartered banks.

We say that the government should order the Bank of Canada to be at the service of all Canadians. The Bank of Canada belongs to all Canadians. Why should it not become the prime tool of the Canadian government to finance the public sector, namely the provinces and the municipalities, instead of borrowing from a foreign country to finance our own country?

[English]

Mr. Colin D. Gibson (Hamilton-Wentworth): Mr. Speaker, this evening we have heard some interesting speeches from the other side of the House. We heard the hon. member for Wellington (Mr. Hales) reiterate the "stand pat" argument that by being too tough in our efforts to conquer inflation we deliberately created unemployment.

Mr. McGrath: You sure did.

Mr. Gibson: It occurs to me on the basis of what I have seen, heard and read in this House that if we had not taken such steps to tackle inflation we would have run our whole price and wage structure up like a balloon and created massive unemployment from coast to coast. This is not rebutted by anyone on the other side, yet they tritely condemn us for tackling the problem. Not one of the speakers opposite explained how we were going to keep people employed by allowing prices to skyrocket to the moon and thus price ourselves out of the market.

Mr. Hales: How about Japan and Germany?

[Mr. Fortin.]

Mr. Gibson: Those countries have not the same environment of employment as we have. They have not the same structure. They have a different set-up, and Japan at least is smaller geographically. They have more modern techniques in different senses than we have. I submit that Japan would be happy to own our untouched resources. But we are going to grapple with these problems and create an economic climate which will be greater than any we have had in the past.

I do not say this with empty sophistry or undue optimism. If we had not planned our economy on a sound basis and kept prices under reasonable control, we would not have the enormous trade balance that we have today. The figures indicate that our economy is on a sound basis. The price of the dollar has gone up and our bank accounts are high.

● (9:00 p.m.)

The fact that bank interest rates are dropping is an optimistic sign that we are well on our way to pulling out of the winter of this bleak period in our economic history.

Admittedly, unemployment figures are high, but we are grappling with them. The Minister of Labour (Mr. Mackasey) will be bringing forward the most modern and up to date amendments to the Unemployment Insurance Act that have ever been presented to any Parliament anywhere. The opposition has not criticized that. I hope it will support the bill when it comes forward. With the help of all parties, I trust that we will speed that legislation through. It will help our economy to progress. Men, instead of waiting in bread lines will be looking for new training opportunities as a result of the bill. Men who have been affected by automation, one of the difficulties of the modern day, will be given, as a result of the legislation, job retraining opportunities. Under our training schemes men will be able to take pride in learning another occupation instead of sitting at home idle and out of work.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Gibson: In a sense, these men will be working because they will be retraining themselves. With our mobility programs there is no reason why, especially when we consider that young people like to move around the country, we cannot make this new manpower retraining scheme the most modern and up to date of its kind in the world. I believe we are on the right track. I admit that some of our problems in the welfare field must be tackled. We cannot just hand cash to people and put them in a better position if they stay home than they would be in if they took even a job paying low wages.

The measures taken by the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Munro) in the welfare field, though glibly condemned by the press as useless efforts are beginning to show signs that encourage one to become optimistic. Officials involved in the field of welfare are pointing out certain inequities in the position of people on welfare. For instance, they have shown us that those who control welfare expenditures generally have not