

Economic Conditions in Rural Communities

present unemployment rate, particularly because many young people under 25 are out of work.

We live in a certain economic and political context, and it is necessary to find solutions to the problems which arise. As I said earlier, at least the New Democratic Party offers a solution. So do the Cr ditistes and they strongly believe in theirs. But on the side of the official opposition, the greatest confusion prevails.

Maybe Progressive Conservative members want to mislead the people, or else they have no knowledge of the Canadian or the North American economy.

It is perhaps still federalism to want a free enterprise economic system in the framework of a federalism where the Canadian Parliament would have no control over-all expenses, or where an increase or a fluctuation in expenses by a few billion dollars could make all the difference. They advocate an economic system such as ours and say it is the wrong way to fight inflation.

They claim that unemployment was deliberately created. That is the biggest intellectual mix-up I have ever seen and it calls for explanations.

[English]

Mr. Alexander: That isn't confusion; it's a fact.

Mr. Breau: It is intellectual confusion, and that is a real fact. That is what I said. I am glad the hon. member across the way got the translation right.

Mr. Alexander: Six hundred and thirty-eight thousand out of work is a fact.

[Translation]

Let them explain to me in an economic context like that of Canada and North America how one can fight inflation without having unemployment.

The Leader of the Official Opposition (M. Stanfield) has made a lot of charges against the government the other day. He charged it of economic incompetence without suggesting anything positive however. Let me explain to me what would be today the economic outlook of Canada if we had not fought inflation! Let him explain to me what would be the unemployment rate today! The members of the Official Opposition will not say, because they know very well that the unemployment rate would be at the very least as high as it is now. They know very well that the economic outlook would not be good and that there would be less investment in Canada. They also know that their arguments are used only to serve their political aims, to justify their position and to try to mislead the electorate.

● (9:40 p.m.)

Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, I wish first of all to tell the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Olson) that when he made his statement on the dairy policy of the government last week, the agriculture committee of which I am a member was touring Western Canada to receive and study submissions by agricultural agencies and the provincial ministers of agriculture.

Consequently, I did not have the opportunity to comment on his statement. I might say today that I appreci-

[Mr. Breau.]

ate the price improvements. When someone takes an action that has been expected for a long time, we have to be honest about it and it would not be ethical for a member to say that it is a step backwards when it is a step forward. This I admit and appreciate, but it shows that I was right last year and again this week when I said that farmers, particularly industrial milk producers were treated as poor relations.

I made that statement in the House when I introduced the petition from 25,000 industrial milk producers in which they were requesting more justice and an emergency debate on the serious problem of dairy production. That petition was never taken into account and I find it regrettable. If the government House leader never informed the House before the end of the previous session, I disapprove him for I feel this is a blow to democracy.

Nevertheless, I think that we have made a step forward and that the claims contained in the petition from 25,000 industrial milk producers were justified. Therefore we will have to keep on fighting to ensure fairer income for those who are involved in the production of industrial milk and that they receive a fair share of the national income.

I reiterate my request on behalf of the people I represent so that when the new dairy policy for the year starting April 1, 1971 is announced, the Minister of Agriculture will propose a new policy likely to satisfy the legitimate demands of this hard-working class.

On the other hand, by speaking on this motion, I wish to call the attention of the government to the general problems of Canadian society and especially those of my area and also, to suggest some solutions to these thorny problems.

We are sometimes blamed for criticizing and offering no solutions, which is not always correct, far from it. The previous speaker, in his remarks, recognized the merits of my statements, and I appreciate his doing so.

The economic situation in general is deteriorating in Canada. Consequently, instead of moving nearer the coming of the just society, we are getting further from it every day.

The economic situation of a great many farmers is worse than ever. That of a great many workers—especially those who are unemployed—is most difficult, and God knows what a problem it is when a father who needs to work every day to support his wife and children is deprived of a paying job. God knows in which condition, in which anxiety this father is living!

The Minister of Regional Economic Expansion (Mr. Marchand) said recently that there was no reason to get upset about the high level of unemployment as this level was normal. Normal? Yes, if you look at this problem from the point of view of the possibility to produce, while man is displaced more and more by machines. Then, if you produce for the sake of production, you can do it without man's contribution, because machines can do the job. If that is the objective, it is normal. But in the present situation it seems to me abnormal that in order to have access to the goods, to the available pro-