

*Alleged Failure of Employment Policies*

effort, is the only saving grace in respect of what appears to be bad policy on the part of the government. A previous speaker said that the government has actually launched a program of creating unemployment. That hon. member was not coining a new phrase; as a matter of fact he was referring to a statement made by ministers of the Crown, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson), and the Prime Minister himself. Obviously, they have not felt any of the effects of the anti-inflationary policy of the government, in their departments or personally. The fact is that the government itself admits that this is a means it is using in an effort to cure or offset the inflationary trends in this nation.

This is the government's policy, and the only saving grace is that we have a Department of Regional Economic Expansion and a Department of Manpower and Immigration with limited funds trying to put a little bit of molasses on a dry slice of bread. This is a policy of push-me-pull-you. We have a government deciding to go in one direction, and in order to take the sting out we have a couple of departments trying their best to offset the over-all impact.

These government departments are perhaps to be commended for the work they are attempting to do on a limited budget. I would be dishonest if I did not say that in my opinion Canadian Manpower offices have done a commendable job with a limited budget in attempting to bring the supply of and demand for labour together. Unfortunately, this effort and the manpower retraining scheme are totally ineffective in overcoming the devastating effects of unemployment. This is unbelievable, and most Canadians will not accept it. If I could speak to our 22 million Canadians today they would call me a liar if I told them 20 persons out of every 100 in my province are unemployed at this time.

As a matter of fact, I looked at the statistics for the days referred to by members from across Canada as the dirty thirties, and found that in 1935 in the country of Newfoundland—it was then the country of Newfoundland; it was not a province—16 per cent of the population was dependent upon some form of government assistance or welfare: sixteen per cent of the people were forced to accept government assistance in the form of welfare or dole. In 1970, 35 years later, after 21 years of Confederation, we have 20 per cent of the population unemployed. We have 87,000 people who depend upon some form of social assistance. This is the most chronic period of our history since 1949.

I guess I am wasting my time by relating these facts to the House of Commons. I have talked to many groups across Canada, in Alberta, British Columbia, Prince Edward Island, Ontario and most other provinces in the last couple of years. I talked to them as far back as 1965 when I spent two years in the very affluent province of Alberta. It is not as affluent today, I might add. These people continually asked me questions such as: "What do you want? We have been giving you this, we have been giving you that, and we have been giving you something else. What is it you want?" I almost began to develop the feeling as a Canadian—not as a Newfoundlander—that there was something second-class or wrong about our getting equalization payments and benefits from the federal government in order to help overcome our disadvantaged position of 1949.

Today I think I can look at the rest of Canada, if I classify myself first as a Newfoundlander, and say that it owes us a tremendous debt because we, along with people in other slow-growth areas, are now paying the full price of the anti-inflationary measures imposed across this dominion. I challenge any member of this House to stand up right now and refute those remarks. Newfoundland, with a population of 500,000, is paying a higher price as a result of the government's anti-inflationary policy than any other part of Canada.

The Minister of Finance stands up in this House, when he is here—almost once a month—and says that the government has launched an anti-inflationary policy and is laying off postmistresses and postmasters of little post offices all along the coast. He says the government has closed post offices all across Canada, that it is not going to build any more wharfs even though they are justified, it is not going to create any more manpower centres, particularly on the east coast of Canada, and it is going to lay off people in all government departments across Canada.

• (4:10 p.m.)

The minister says we are doing these things to help the people on fixed and low incomes and the seasonally unemployed. Often in this House I have said those on fixed and low incomes, as well as the seasonally unemployed are the people who are carrying the full load of the government's anti-inflationary policy. I stand here and I tell the Prime Minister that I am wasting my time. I tell the Minister of Manpower and Immigration that