

*The Budget—Mr. Lundrigan*

I could go on and reflect on the concept of regional disparity held by the former minister, but I want to reflect on the budget in the sense that there has been a misrepresentation made to the Canadian people by the statement that there is a great array of programs proposed and being followed by this government to meet the needs of those people who are affected by regional disparity in Canada. But firstly, I wish to reflect on the monetary policies of this government which are supposed to be geared to regional disparity and which, in my opinion, are anything but. I believe that if one were to speak with Canadians in most of the slow growth areas one would find that this is one of the worst years in the history of the Canadian nation so far as unemployment is concerned and so far as general living conditions are concerned. I have had an opportunity to visit around a little. I am not as widely travelled as some hon. members, but I do travel a bit in Canada. Things really are not too different in certain of the slow growth areas. We have seen evidence of this fact this year in New Brunswick. We have seen the repercussions from the back of policy in Newfoundland and a good number of other places.

A national policy has been applied right across the whole nation in an effort to curb inflation. I agree that perhaps there are some moves being made by the Department of Regional Economic Expansion, but I am not prepared to accept any practice, policy or philosophy aimed at curtailing inflation which is put into effect across the board equally in all parts of Canada. Last year, in the budgetary white paper, the Minister of Finance indicated some policies which now are having the effect of increasing unemployment in the Atlantic provinces. He asked how we could curb inflation and, at the same time, not hurt the slow growth areas. This is a dilemma. The minister, in his recent budget, did not seem to be too concerned about this dilemma.

I could go on to mention little things which might not seem to be too important. The Department of Public Works has gone on a holiday so far as facilities for the operators and fishermen in Atlantic Canada are concerned. We talk about the application of the policies of the Postmaster General (Mr. Kierans) which might not seem to be important in terms of their effect on the hundreds of postal operators in eastern Canada. This might not seem to be too important in relation to the numbers affected throughout Canada; but it seems important to the people in this area.

[Mr. Lundrigan.]

We were happy when the Minister of Transport (Mr. Jamieson) who got his new job because it reduced the unemployment in Newfoundland a little bit, by at least one.

Again, we have the problem of the roads to resources program which was cancelled. This was a move towards national restraint. A number of transportational aids to various parts of Canada have been cut out again to curb inflation and in an effort, so-called, to balance the budget which the minister has promised but has never been able to achieve. Again, this year we have the lifting of the 5 per cent interest rate on loans to farmers and fishermen under the new farm and fishing improvement loans acts. This also was a move perhaps to curb expenditures or lending which certainly imposed additional hardships on the people.

We have the business about the elimination of tariffs. When the minister was speaking about reciprocal arrangements we heard no mention about our neighbours to the south, for example, coming up with similar packages. But he goes on with things of this kind. I do not know whether the representatives of the small industries which are spread around the coast have had an opportunity to talk this over with the minister to learn his attitude and express their reaction to it. He says there has been a fair amount of involvement. I wonder what will happen to the small textile industries in Winnipeg which are now relocating in places like Peguis Indian reserves, and which are trying to make their way. These are very marginal industries, but they are surviving. What about the problem in the eastern townships of Quebec in respect of the marginal textile industries. Again, the minister shakes his head to indicate there will be no effect. I shall wait to see proof of this.

I shall wait to see proof in respect of the marginal industries in Canada, those small industries which are barely existing right now. Extra competition could very well force them out of existence. They are the industries which are in slow growth areas. They are not making very many sales and have transportation costs. These are likely to be the type of industries which will be forced out of existence. I ask the Minister of Finance what kind of policies he has designed to offset the kind of increased unemployment which I forecast will occur in the eastern townships and other parts of Canada in which marginal industries are barely surviving. These are the problems I would like to talk about.