

Alleged Non-Support of Employment Programs

Mr. Osler: On an afternoon like this, when the opposition is given time to discuss these problems in this House, could it not spend some of its time proposing some long term solutions? Could it not tell the House what it thinks the long term solutions are to our problems? What do opposition members think ought to be done to alleviate this unemployment situation? After all, this is the opposition's day. They talk about policy by castigating the government for failing to foresee the escalating effects of its unemployment policies. I say to the opposition, this is your day; why not do a little foreseeing yourselves. Why do you not make some suggestions so that we can prevent this situation in the future?

Mr. Orlikow: We did last year and you ignored them.

Mr. Osler: It is a damn good thing that we did.

Mr. Ricard: We told you what to do.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. May I respectfully suggest to hon. members that they continue their very interesting discussion through the Chair.

Mr. Osler: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate your point. It seems to me that it is the long term questions that are outstanding. I should like to hear several questions asked by the opposition. The hon. member for Winnipeg North (Mr. Orlikow) came close to asking one of them. For instance, I would ask, is a ten-year average of an unemployment rate that is close to 5 per cent in Canada good enough? No, I say; it is not good enough. The hon. member for Winnipeg North suggested that 3 or 4 per cent would be acceptable, perhaps. I agree with him; but we might not be able to bring it down to 3 or 4 per cent. Let us consider what would happen in our federal structure. If there were 3 or 4 per cent as an average in the whole country, there would probably be less than 1 per cent in Ontario, and the place would boil over.

Mr. Orlikow: What is wrong with that?

Mr. Osler: You would get a great inflationary boom starting in Ontario, and the people in the Maritimes as well as people everywhere else would consequently suffer.

Mr. Gilbert: Tell us about the FLQ; was that not brought about because of unemployment?

Mr. Osler: It would be useless telling the hon. member about the FLQ; he did not recognize them as a problem last October.

Mr. Gilbert: Please tell us.

Mr. Osler: The point I am trying to make is this. We have a federal system in this country. If you want to see an "ideal" national unemployment rate of 3 per cent, 4 per cent or any other rate and not see a 10 per cent unemployment rate in Newfoundland, or a 15 per cent rate in parts of Quebec, what will you do? How will you get employment spread across the country properly? Will you do as Walter Gordon suggested, dump the whole

[Mr. Osler.]

thing on Ontario and to hell with the rest of the country? Will you be a federalist or a centralist? Do you want everyone to live around Toronto, where the money is? Frankly, I should like to know, Mr. Speaker, what the members of the opposition feel? How do they think we can get our unemployment rate down to 3 or 4 per cent and keep it there? That is what I should like them to tell us.

Another question I should like answered is this: how can we improve on this situation, without heating up the centre or cooling off the extremities to the point of freezing? Can we keep the centre reasonably cool without freezing the rest of Canada? Do we need wage and price controls?

Mr. Skoberg: What about profits?

Mr. Osler: The hon. member would not understand profits and there is no use whatsoever in our discussing them with him. Members of the NDP do not understand profits. We should not waste our time explaining this subject to them.

An hon. Member: The hon. member wants to keep wages down.

Mr. Osler: In New Zealand, a wage stabilization policy, intended to limit wage increases sought by New Zealand trade unions to 7 per cent for the coming year, will be endorsed by the New Zealand parliament. That statement is carried in the *Globe and Mail* of February 25. I am not saying whether that is a good or a bad policy; I am merely saying that that is the kind of question that ought to be asked. It touches on our problem much more directly than does this wish-washy motion. It would be awfully good if the opposition would discuss our problems and give us ideas, so that we might know how the opposition would deal with the problems and solve them in the long term.

Should trade be "free"? Are those hon. members for free trade or against it? Can we afford to have imports worth \$700 per Canadian, when the United States imports only \$180 per capita and Japan only \$150? It is important to remember that we import a great deal; on the other hand, perhaps we must import when we export so much per capita. Those are the sorts of problems I want to hear about from the opposition. They touch on our long term welfare as a nation.

How can we get a higher labour co-efficient into the dollar value of our manufactures? We have many people saying that we should not give our raw materials away. Let us hear concrete proposals to show how we are to inject more Canadian labour content into the products of our industries. How will you attract capital? How will you force industry to do more processing here? Let us hear from hon. members of the opposition. These are the problems which must be solved. Should we rationalize more of our production effort, to increase our volume? In other words, should our anti-trust laws be changed or not? Are these laws good enough? Are tariff policies relevant in light of the activities of multi national corporations throughout the world? Do some hon. members