

The Economy

tax return and pay back the government every year, as they are now doing for that matter.

However, there would be this very important difference: they would pay taxes on their supplementary income only once whereas today in addition to being checked every month or every three months, and getting a cut-back in their pension cheques every month, because they made sacrifices and put a little money aside for their old age, they still have to file their income tax returns. By allowing this situation to continue, we not only make the lives of 50 per cent of our senior citizens miserable, we actually give them the Tantalus treatment day after day as we put them through the water drop torture.

To ensure equal justice for all pensioners I have asked the government on many occasions to issue pension cheques on the basis of citizenship rather than marital status, as is the case today. At present, a married couple receives \$22 less every month than a registered non-married couple or two persons living under the same roof. Yet each has contributed in the same way as all Canadian citizens, so why not pay them back on that basis?

That is just another discrimination that must be corrected for people 60 years of age and over in addition to reducing the purchasing power of the legally married couple who deserve their rightful participation in the Canadian economy, just like anyone else.

If we blame the government today for having failed in its fight against inflation and unemployment, we can blame it even more for having introduced bills whose social impact are clearly antisocial. I have mentioned that several times in this House: almost 80 per cent of our so-called social laws are in fact antisocial. Take them one by one and you will realize it; besides, all the examples I have mentioned are proof of it.

Mr. Speaker, in closing my remarks, I urge once more the government to consider the two points I made earlier in my motion, namely, workers 18 to 30 years of age, and a pension for all persons aged 60 or over who want one.

I am convinced that if the government would heed my suggestions it would then have a most efficient weapon to launch a real attack on inflation and unemployment.

● (1242)

[English]

Mr. Paul Dick (Lanark-Renfrew-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, on an opposition day the normal practice is for the mover of an opposition motion to speak first and then for a government spokesman to rise, but today it appears that the government does not want to speak too early.

I would like to start by pointing out that the first three lines of the motion put down by the Social Credit party are very interesting, as is the second part of the motion. I think I shall have to restrict my comments today to the first three lines, or the first part of the motion which states:

● (1252)

That this House strongly condemns the government:

(1) for having failed at the task in the fight against inflation and unemployment which are affecting mostly the workers between 18 and 30 years of age.

In the time allocated to me I should like to speak on that topic for a few moments. It can be said of the situation in which we find ourselves in 1978 that the young people of this country can be referred to as the Canadians forgotten by this Liberal government. The present government has paid lip service to their cause. It has put out flyers, printed posters, and prepared a number of advertising programs on what it is doing for the young people, but in effect it has not even scratched the surface. I can remember the 1972 election campaign when the Liberal candidates and the Liberal government were telling the young people that at that time there was a high rate of unemployment, especially among the youth of this country, but that by 1975 demography showed there would be a shortage of young people ready to contribute to the work force of this country. That propaganda did not turn out to be true because by 1975 there was a higher rate of unemployment among the young people, which continues today in 1978, three years later than predicted in 1972.

The second matter that concerns me is the fact that the government has frequently said that this is a temporary problem which will be overcome by 1980, implying that the baby boom will have passed and that there will be fewer people seeking work. The true fact is that we have had at least ten years of problems with unemployment among the youth of this country, and that we have at least ten years of them ahead of us. I hope that the government will start to recognize this fact and will start planning on this basis.

The first part of the Social Credit motion refers to how inflation has hurt the young people today. First of all, unless a young person is from a wealthy family, that person is not established and does not have a bank roll enabling him to live through inflation. When a young person gets out into the work-a-day world and lives as an adult member of society, he wishes to buy a house. But the cost of a house has gone up from, perhaps, \$21,000 in 1971, to \$46,000 or \$47,000 today. That is the price of the smallest type of housing unit you could find in any urban area where most young people are. It is harder for them to get that money because they cannot get the jobs, and also because in the last few years salaries have not increased as fast as inflation as regards basic commodities such as housing.

Another basic commodity required by a young family starting out is an automobile. Whereas an automobile would have cost \$3,400 in 1970, today it costs \$6,200. Again the price has doubled in eight years, whereas salaries of young people have not doubled, that is, if they can find a job. So those young people do not have a bank roll, and inflation is hitting them really hard.

The other problem is that inflation is probably what is most devastating, whether it be in Germany in the 1930s, in Brazil, or in Canada, because in the long run inflation causes more unemployment. I think the government must be taken to task for not solving a number of problems.