

Alleged Failure to Reduce Unemployment

criticizing and accusing the governments that have done nothing. I am not among those who think governments do nothing, but I believe that all together we can do more and do better.

I already dealt with the possibility of enabling the farmers to benefit from cheaper labour through the help of Unemployment Insurance offices. At the present time we are paying people to do nothing on account of our unemployment insurance system and the farmer needs workers of one kind during certain periods of the year and of another kind during the whole year.

That would enable him, I believe, to get cheaper labour, while the government would not have to pay a cent more. Whenever one requests something of the government, he can always be answered in the following way: who is going to pay?

We know of working people earning \$50 per week while some others who are not working are paid weekly benefits of \$50. It is important to make our population and our unemployed people productive. I thought farmers could pay a sum equal to the unemployment insurance benefits, thereby helping someone willing to work for a reasonable salary. As a matter of fact, a worker would get double what he is getting unemployment insurance benefits without the government paying a single cent. Thus, the producer's or the farmer's production costs would be lower and the consumer would benefit by it.

Another idea comes to my mind that I should like to offer as a suggestion to the government in order to have them adopt helpful measures for the population.

Unemployment Insurance offices were centralized, which to my mind does not lead, at least in my constituency, to the expected results and complaints were made as to that. Reasons of economy were given and perhaps justifiably so. As for the service given, it is obvious that it is very poor at the present time. Actually, how can you expect unemployed people to make long distance telephone calls or to travel 25 or 30 miles in order to collect their benefits?

I will give you some facts. In my riding, people are now compelled to go to St. Jerome. On the other hand, Sorel residents, though not residing in my riding, have to travel to Longueuil.

In my opinion, these regulations are not very impressive, but they would be very useful to the unemployed. This policy should be

[Mr. La Salle.]

re-examined in order to assist the unemployed who are eligible to benefits and the employers who are often in need of information.

In spite of all, let us hope Canadians will not become disenchanted. They could easily lose faith because, in the course of an election campaign, the bright prospect of a just society was held out to them, but today's reality is a far cry in relation to what they had hoped for.

There have been talks of a department of regional development and it is still a current topic. Such a department was to bring about important advantages for the people.

There were discussions about an economic situation that was seemingly quite healthy but it was immediately realized that there were some problems to be solved.

Three or four months ago, it was felt that things were not quite right. Our friends would not admit it then, but now the Minister is finding out that problems do exist. He also agrees that solutions are not always easy to come by and that the members of the opposition seem to know what should be done.

We do not propose to offer magic solutions or to have all the answers to the present problems, far from it! However, we acknowledged the problem, four months ago, though the government members denied it. That is why the people are disappointed. The fleeting dream is becoming more and more of a nightmare. They cannot help feeling that way, for, no later than yesterday night, we were told about the closing, in Montreal, of "Terre des Hommes" because of growing difficulties. This decision, made by the responsible authorities, will probably cause more unemployment for the city of Montreal.

Will the federal government do something about it? The question was asked this afternoon. The right honourable Prime Minister's view seems to be that this does not fall under federal jurisdiction. But why should not the hon. Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Pepin) invite those concerned to discuss some kind of master plan to try to find an answer that would be acceptable to the federal and provincial governments and to the city of Montreal.

After all, we must admit that the city of Montreal has some bearing on the economy of Canada.

As a matter of fact, there are over 56 members from Quebec in the government and a good number of them represent the city of