

Anti-Inflation Policies

[English]

Mr. Skoberg: Mr. Speaker, may I call it six o'clock?

Mr. Speaker: Order. It being six o'clock, I do now leave the chair until 8 p.m.

At six o'clock the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

Mr. John L. Skoberg (Moose Jaw): Mr. Speaker, in taking part in this debate on the motion introduced by the official opposition, I can only start by saying that it is up to the people to decide whether we can live with inflation or unemployment. Having listened to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson) this afternoon and to the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) who has spoken in the House on numerous occasions on this subject, it is clear to me that they believe it is for the people to choose either inflation or unemployment. The Prime Minister has stated so categorically. He has made it clear that the government is prepared to accept a high level of unemployment, and in fact appears to encourage it, in the interest of fighting inflation.

The Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. MacEachen) admitted that unemployment is at the crisis level. Cornwall, Ontario, has been described as the most job-depressed city in Canada. Plant closures have resulted in an unemployment level of 30 per cent. It is little wonder that the opposition wanted to know what the government planned to do about the crisis in Cornwall. A question directed to the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion (Mr. Marchand) seemed an appropriate place to start. The minister did not seem to think so. He wondered out loud why the opposition was so concerned about Cornwall. "If it is unemployment you are worried about", he said, "I can point to many other cities in Canada where unemployment is more serious". We have known this for some time, but this is the first time the government has admitted it.

This afternoon data was produced by members of the House concerning the level of unemployment across Canada. In fact, in Saskatchewan—excluding the farm situation—unemployment is in excess of 12 per cent. This does not appear in DBS figures, but it is the situation that exists. As I listened to the Minister of Finance this afternoon and heard how the government plans to

help Canadians survive inflation, by causing unemployment, I was reminded of the story of a man who was training his horse to live without food. He had just succeeded when the horse died. I suggest to the House that this is exactly the attitude the government is taking. That is why the motion introduced by the official opposition is quite in order. We in this party have no hesitation in supporting it 100 per cent.

The Prime Minister is putting great stress on the position taken by the economists—a position which I find incredible. I think it is only right that one should look, for an example, to countries other than our own to support one's argument, particularly in view of the fact that economists have different points of view on how to combat inflation and cope with unemployment. I could think of no better place to look than in a publication put out by Loeb, Rhoades and Co., a member of the New York Stock Exchange, which certainly is not recognized as being left of centre. In it there are "Fables For Our Time," and I quote:

• (8:10 p.m.)

There had been no open season for many a year, and the deer had multiplied in profusion. In their search for food they had forayed into the fields surrounding the woods in ever increasing numbers and had become quite a nuisance to the farmers. So the villagers called a council and decided to organize a great hunt. They were an impressive, even frightening sight as they approached the woods in their resplendent outfits, armed with threatening weapons of varying sizes and exhorting each other loudly to mighty deeds of destruction. But, alas, years of inexperience in this specific pursuit had somewhat blunted the acuity of their vision and their aim, and the deer had become strong, stealthy and more fleet footed than ever. So when a temporary halt was called after quite a while for a tally, the hunters had nothing to show for their strenuous efforts but three dead cows and several maimed hunters. "This is quite a bag," proclaimed one of the villagers; "perhaps we had better call it a day." "But we have not even sighted our quarry," objected another.

That reminds me of the Prices and Incomes Commission.

"Silly boy," replied a third who was held in particular esteem by his fellow citizens for having attended the University of Chicago. "We have given those deer a terrible scare, and every fool knows that after a somewhat indeterminate time lag they will just lie down and die. As a matter of fact, considering how we have scared each other, we may have already overdone it. Perhaps we had better throw them some hay lest they become as extinct as common sense economics."

This fable is characteristic of the situation now being faced by the Canadian people. Is the government going to tell the people who