

Economic Policies and Unemployment

• (12:40 p.m.)

[English]

Furthermore, the government, in conjunction with the Minister of Finance, should admit that it made the wrong economic decisions, and gear its policy to full employment, develop foreign markets, foster the expansion of secondary industry by adequate measures, hasten the reforms of the Unemployment Insurance Commission, and take steps with a view to reducing immigration, selecting immigrants, and adapting the immigration policy to the present requirements of the country.

Mr. Speaker, the government could also do a great deal for students. It could, for instance, develop national parks in summer-time, and force foreign companies who have subsidiaries in Canada to employ a greater number of students.

In the report submitted to the House, it was stated that, unfortunately, several companies had hired American students last summer. I hope that, this year, the government will take some action to ensure that industry will hire Canadian students in preference to foreign ones.

Unemployment is a human drama, a social ill. Economically speaking, it is costly and it is prejudicial to our democratic institutions. The family man who is unemployed is an easy prey for all kinds of social agitators. He is unable to satisfy the essential needs of his family. His dignity as a human being is lessened and he feels abandoned by society. Unemployment leads to poverty, and its consequences, from a social standpoint, are known to us.

There are obviously some serious problems. I refer to the important priority to which the government should devote itself immediately. The government should take into account the considerable number of people 40 and over affected by unemployment. The government should take steps to make it possible for them to find work.

There is another problem which is that of the disabled who still can be useful. The government should see to it that they get better co-operation and better attention from the officials at manpower centres.

Of course, there is also the problem of the employees of all ages with a lesser education. These are, in short, the proposals I am putting forward today through a motion urging the government to take the necessary steps and decisions to check as soon as possible unemployment in Canada before this dangerous and disastrous situation gets worse.

Mr. Doug Rowland (Selkirk): I should indicate to members before I commence that the colour of my shirt does not necessarily have any social significance, merely a sartorial one.

An hon. Member: How about the colour of your speech?

Mr. Rowland: C'est la même chose.

I was fortunate in preparing my first major intervention in the House in that I was confronted not with the problem of finding adequate documentation to support my case but rather with an embarrassment of riches. The catalogue of government follies in respect of anti-inflationary policies is virtually unending. Probably the kindest thing we can say about the government's anti-inflationary policies is that they represent dismal, utter and complete failure.

Mr. Saltsman: That is an understatement.

Mr. Rowland: They have been disastrous for two major reasons, the first being the total absence of selectivity, both in respect of regions of the country and sectors of the economy, and second, because of the total lack of sensitivity both in human and in economic terms.

I understand that it is customary on occasions such as this, when a member makes his first major intervention in the House, to spend some time discussing the nature and character of his constituency, but this particular topic does not lend itself to that kind of approach. However, there is one bit of local lore which I might bring into the debate. I represent a constituency in which there is to be found a large Icelandic population, and accordingly, during the recent election campaign, I became very well acquainted with some of the Norse sagas. One of the more impressive figures to emerge from the sagas is the Berserker. The Berserker was an heroic figure, a man who in the heat of battle became so overcome by blood lust that he struck about himself indiscriminately with any weapons of destruction which came to hand.

While one must admit that the Berserker would be a marvellous ally in the case of war or on the battlefield, he would become an object of horror in a modern operating room. Yet, this is the approximate situation with which the Liberal government has presented the people of Canada. The Minister of