

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY, S.O. 58—JOB OPPORTUNITIES FOR CANADIANS

The House resumed debate on the motion of Mr. Crombie:

That this House condemns the government for its deliberate failure to create job opportunities for Canadians.

Hon. Roch La Salle (Joliette): Mr. Speaker, since I also come from a province where unemployment is pretty high, I should like to take advantage of this opposition day to speak to the motion by my colleague, the hon. member for Rosedale (Mr. Crombie), a motion that, I feel, is very apt, considering the incredible size and impact of unemployment in Canada. I was absolutely flabbergasted when I heard government members say we had failed to come up with satisfactory proposals to turn around the present situation. I was also surprised and disappointed when I heard the last two speeches. First, the Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Kelly) told us that he needed allies, not critics. Well, the New Democratic Party was his ally for quite some time. However, the alliance did not turn out to their advantage, and I hope the NDP will never again make the mistake of supporting a government that betrayed us for so long. I also heard him repeat, as did the minister earlier, that it was not the government's fault. The situation is so complex that it all depends on what our neighbours do, and the government has no responsibility for the present situation! Now that is what I would call government by irresponsibility and incompetence.

Today, with the track record this government has had for 15 years, I do not think their wishy-washy defence of the present situation will go down well with Canadians. The previous speaker mentioned that budgets for the next four or five years were estimated to run into billions and billions of dollars. Fifteen years ago, I think the budget was about \$10 billion. We have one now that is worth \$60 billion, and what have we got, Mr. Speaker: 300,000 workers unemployed in 1968 and more than a million in 1982. So I really wonder how much unemployment the projected \$60 billion will get us, assuming that the government and its philosophy remain the same.

I also heard the minister say he had proposed a large number of programs. Since he is in the House today, I should like to tell him that he has not made the slightest dent in the philosophy followed by his predecessors. He is merely upholding the policies of a government that circumstances oblige him to defend. He really cannot be anxious to face the Canadian people today, considering the results of this government's policies. He has merely continued to defend a philosophy that is leading this country into bankruptcy. I am not saying the minister did not try to do something about the economy, but his programs are woefully inadequate to cope with the present situation. They cannot prevent the loss of 175,000 jobs in the

Employment

next few months. When the minister tells us about occupational training, he should realize that it is because there were not enough of these programs five or ten years ago that we have this problem today. People say this country has the best job-creation record, compared to other industrialized countries, but at the same time it has the highest unemployment rate. And the previous speaker fails to understand how this is possible.

● (1650)

If we had developed training programs, if we had done more research to modernize our traditional plants ten years ago, we would not be in this situation of losing two jobs every time one job is created. This is something that the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Axworthy) should understand, and instead of asking us to excuse the Minister, as the hon. member did earlier, we should be asked to forgive this incompetence. The Canadian people should be told: as the Liberals alone know the truth you must understand that they did not purposely create this unfortunate situation from which Canadians are now suffering. I am sorry, Mr. Speaker! I believe that we, in the opposition, have the duty day after day to tell Canadians about this disaster and this gigantic economic failure.

We have succeeded for a while in putting aside the constitutional debate. Let us now talk of bread and butter issues. Every day, television, radio and newspapers give us bad news, and the public is concerned and uncertain. As recently as 12 or 18 months ago, thousands of unemployed hoped to find a job, but now there are thousands of employed workers who are terribly worried that they might lose their jobs. This insecurity cannot continue, Mr. Speaker! The Minister and the members of the government will ask us to help them but they have been incompetent and we certainly have the duty to condemn them and denounce them to the public. They no longer deserve the confidence of the Canadian people. Their type of administration and their abilities no longer meet the needs of Canada.

This week, there is a federal-provincial conference, which may not yet be over. Ten premiers got together to denounce the economic policy of the federal government. The Minister of Employment and Immigration will try to tell us that what he is doing is right, but ten premiers representing ten provinces, not members of the official opposition, are now denouncing the government and asking for an emergency plan. Of course, members opposite will tell us once again about their good will, about their good intentions, about programs worth millions! What should be done immediately, Mr. Speaker, is to develop an emergency plan to stop plants from closing all over Canada. Quebec is greatly affected by this problem.

Mr. Speaker, nothing in the budget gives us any hope that the problem will be solved in the short term. Some will say that we are asking for investments as well as cuts in spending. Of course, because in politics you have to make choices Mr.