

*Canadian Economy*

structure to the Montreal region and to my own region, of course. I do not think one can discuss at length the work of the Department of Regional Economic Expansion but I believe it is always to our credit as a government to point out the very positive action this Department has taken.

Finally, if we are to help regions and create employment in industrially weak sectors, we should consider the ongoing decentralization program of the provincial government. The federal government will decentralize many jobs which we will move from Ottawa to areas such as Sherbrooke, Shawinigan, or Quebec City. I think that shows the federal government has a clear intention which means: Look, we are participating where there are needs, where there is a lack of jobs and steady jobs.

Of course, if jobs are created through sending civil servants to such areas, there is a multiplying effect. If 150 jobs are moved to the Sherbrooke area, this number can easily be multiplied by four, because of the services created by these jobs. I think today's Social Credit motion related to important points. This motion illustrates, of course, that they are willing to participate and I encourage them in making efforts to make propositions, as they certainly have this capacity, and if they meet difficulties in doing it all by themselves, I invite them to consult us and we shall encourage them.

**Mr. Roch La Salle (Joliette):** Mr. Speaker, as the other speakers who preceded me, I would also like to make some remarks on this motion which certainly lends itself to many observations. When we read at the very beginning of this motion, and I quote:

That this House deploras (a) that the government has shown a lack of foresight and leadership in respect of the flooding of the Canadian market with foreign goods, particularly in the areas of footwear, textiles, clothing and furniture, which has contributed a great deal in weakening Canadian industries and resulted in a number of layoffs;

I think, Mr. Speaker, that comments made by other members of this House all have some value.

● (1722)

I noticed also that the Minister of Finance, who was speaking on behalf of the federal government, attempted by a series of statistics to justify the present situation and, of course, he had to admit that there were still unsolved problems. Yet, he tried to tell the House that considering the rate of unemployment, the percentage in relation to heads of families was not all that bad after all.

I would have hoped, for example, that the Minister of Finance had talked about that rather impressive percentage of young people among the one million unemployed in this country, and I would have liked him to echo the same concerns that we and others express, that is the concern of the young people who get discouraged, the discouragement of that youth just out of university or school and still waiting for a Canada Works project. Indeed, the motion calls for increased votes. I deeply appreciate in the present context the moneys approved for those projects under which young and not so young people are

[Mr. Loiselle (Chambly).]

hired for a given period. But we are not going to build the future of this country with such projects.

The government has no industrial strategy after being in power for 13 years. They talk of implementing a series of industrial strategy measures area by area or province by province. But why did the government wait until it had been in power for 13 years before talking about this today? I read in the papers that the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) might call an economic summit or conference next February. The Premier of Ontario pointed out that he has been calling for such a conference since last October, but it does seem that after the meetings with the provincial premiers, an economic summit will probably take place. But they had to wait until the difficulties facing the Canadian people day after day were such that they had to come up with new measures, and they tell us that we are not going to solve the problem by criticizing the federal government, but there is always a minimum of decency. I believe that we, in the opposition, must prove that this government has failed in many areas, and I think it is our duty to prove it with all the comments we can make and we will certainly not have a hard time proving such a fantastic failure.

The Minister of Finance also spoke rapidly about the prices and wages commission, or rather about anti-inflation measures. I would like to recall for a few minutes that anti-inflation measures certainly did not bring about the anticipated success. I would like to demonstrate how these measures upset many people because of the lack of good preparation right from the start. We remember very well how far the federal government deliberately misled the provinces, the unions, the employers and the Canadian people as a whole; we remember that the government—

**Mr. Loiselle (Chambly):** This is not true!

**Mr. La Salle:** I am told that this is not true. I think we were promised that no such measures would be implemented. The government was elected on a false representation in 1974. The measures were implemented a few months after the federal election but the 90-day preparatory freeze had been skipped. Such a proposal which was in our program was offhandedly rejected. With this the government would have obtained the cooperation of the unions, the provinces, the businessmen, the business world and of all the important sectors in our economy to establish together some criteria and consequently to apply restrictions which would have enabled the government, with the cooperation of these essential sectors, to meet its objective, namely to slow down inflation.

As a result of that failure, the board had to make discretionary decisions, and operate on a day by day basis. Mr. Speaker, the best way to demonstrate the ineffectiveness of those measures and the serious problems they caused to many workers is to mention Abex Industries Ltd. in my own riding's main urban centre, Joliette. In July 1976, the union had signed an agreement with the employer providing increases of 17 per cent for the first year and 11 per cent for the second year, and