

nothing but the dismal monthly unveiling of statistics which reflect gloom and doom in this country, and there is gloom and doom in the land, Mr. Speaker.

I could go on and speak about the long-term unemployed. That used to be an aberration in this country. It was something that used to be identified with the Atlantic Provinces, with the "have-not" Provinces. Long-term unemployment is today a national phenomenon. Let us take a look at what has happened. By "long-term unemployed", of course, we mean those people who have been unemployed for four months or more. Let us start with March of 1980. Of a total unemployment figure of 969,000, there were 375,000 long-term unemployed. That has grown consistently from March of 1980 to March of 1981, with 374,000 of 983,000, to March of 1982, with 505,000 of 1,200,000, to what it is today, with 907,000 people in this country who are long-term unemployed of an official unemployment figure of 1.6 million.

● (1540)

I say to the Government: End this session. Get on with the obligations to the people of this country. Bring in a new speech outlining the new priorities. Surely the Government has at least an obligation to the unemployed of the country.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Are there Hon. Members wishing to ask questions of the Hon. Member who has just spoken? If not, the Chair will recognize the Hon. Member for Burin-St. George's (Mr. Simmons).

Mr. Roger Simmons (Burin-St. George's): Mr. Speaker, the motion of the Hon. Member for Simcoe North (Mr. Lewis) would have this House condemn the Government for its failure to live up to commitments made in the Throne speech. I refer to that part of the resolution particularly, because it must be literally mind-boggling for that Hon. Member or any Hon. Member representing the Conservative Party to make that kind of an allegation. They have gone around the country taking great credit for what they were allegedly able to do in so far as the constitutional initiative was concerned. I say to the Hon. Member for Simcoe North and others that at some point they ought to make up their minds. If they want to take credit for the constitutional initiative, they ought to realize that any success which that initiative had was achieved in this Chamber.

Miss MacDonald: On this side.

Mr. Simmons: Therefore, either there has been a success or there has not been a success. One cannot argue out of both sides of one's mouth. That is what they are doing in this particular case.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: We think we'll hear you being proven wrong by you right now.

Supply

Mr. Simmons: Mr. Speaker, my good friend from Saskatoon is in a lively mood today. He has much reason to be. I will come back to that.

I also find it to be a little inconsistent that the Hon. Member for Simcoe North would rise in his place today and make this particular resolution just three or four days after he had written a letter, with which we are all familiar now, in which he undertook on behalf of his colleagues in the Opposition to facilitate the passage of some legislation.

Once again I ask him, which is it that he wants? Does he want the legislation to die on the Order Paper or does he want to facilitate the passage of the legislation? With his knowledge of parliamentary reform and procedure, I am sure he is aware that if the session were to end today, for example, then all these pieces of legislation would die on the Order Paper and we would have to go back to square one, as it were, from a procedural standpoint. Therefore, does he want to facilitate passage of legislation or are these just words which are convenient for the moment? I suggest the words of this resolution are convenient for the present moment?

An Hon. Member: Just words.

Mr. Simmons: How does the Hon. Member square his advocacy that we ought to end this session forthwith, with the publicly known fact that tomorrow the Government proposes bringing in a budget? Does he not realize that implicit in his—

Miss MacDonald: That is what frightens the country.

Mr. Simmons: The Hon. Member for Kingston and The Islands (Miss MacDonald) has been frightened by reality before.

Miss MacDonald: I have been frightened by Mr. MacEachen many times.

Mr. Simmons: She will be frightened again in June, at the leadership convention, by some more reality.

Miss MacDonald: Oh, really? Tell me more.

Mr. Simmons: Oh, I see that the Hon. Member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath) is awake, he who has the ability to say nonsense in the most compassionate terms. Nonsense, nevertheless, but he says it in the most compassionate way.

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): You don't even know what compassion is.

Mr. Simmons: In the most appealing way, he is able to convince people, as he convinced me during my days in Newfoundland, that he is a strong advocate of certain matters.

I can now see, Your Honour. I have been stalling all this while, waiting for my glasses to come back from the optometrist's.

Miss MacDonald: That is indicative of the Government.

Mr. Simmons: Let me read those notes again.