

*Government Administrative Policies*

together the leaders of our major labour unions. A private meeting could be held well away from the press, radio, television and all publicity. He could talk to them at his home in a quiet, restrained manner and outline the tremendous need for their co-operation in the drive to keep prices within reasonable bounds. He should point out that this is necessary if products are to be sold in Canada and abroad in the face of foreign competition, and that it is necessary if we are to create more jobs for Canadians.

My sixth suggestion is that the government, without further delay, make up its mind about what kind of help it will give our export industries to enable them to maintain the present level of sales. This level may be satisfactory today, but because Canada has had to go on a floating exchange rate our export industries face very serious competition in world markets. Their products have been made much more expensive because the Canadian dollar has been put on a floating exchange rate. If they are to maintain their markets they will have to reduce prices, and in order to do that they must have help from the government. If help is not forthcoming, many orders which would have been obtained for Canada will be lost, and it follows that jobs will be lost: foreigners will be given employment that should be given to Canadians.

Mr. Speaker, these are very simple, straightforward economic proposals which from experience I am convinced will work. I should like the economic ministers of the Crown, starting with the Minister of Finance, to take these suggestions and either use them, modify them or have the courtesy to explain to the opposition side of the House why they are unworkable, if they believe them to be so, in present circumstances.

• (5:40 p.m.)

I think the time has come for the government to stop laughing, sneering and joking about the economic plight this country is in today. They should stop making fun of suggestions which come from the opposition. Above all, we want the government either to accept our suggestions or put forward plans of its own that will work, reduce costs, enable prices to be kept down, make our products more competitive so that Canadians can sell more readily against foreign competition in Canada and abroad, and so produce more jobs for our people.

These are the kinds of plans we want to hear about. We take no pride in their authorship. I do not wish to hear the government say that a proposal like that was brought forward by the hon. member for Prince Edward-Hastings or anybody else. All I want is this government to come forward with a plan that will meet the tremendous problem of our very rapidly rising unemployment. I outlined the figures at the beginning of my remarks. Our unemployment is going up at a startling rate. This is not just a statistics, as the Prime Minister would like us to believe; it represents human misery, privation and desperation which affects a great many Canadians. The trouble is that it is growing worse every hour of every day.

I earnestly ask the government to accept these suggestions in the spirit in which they are put forward. If they are wrong, let the government have the decency and courtesy to tell us why. If they are any good at all and can be used, let the government use them. If they can be used in their entirety, let it use them. If the government can produce something better, let it produce it. But for heaven's sake let it stop pretending that the problem does not exist. Let it stop living in an Alice in Wonderland atmosphere in which people always expect something to turn up tomorrow in some miraculous fashion. Speaking from a practical businessman's point of view, I say these things do not happen miraculously. They happen only if plans are well thought out and put into operation in a serious, conscientious and practical manner.

**Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, before we recess at six o'clock I wish to speak for a few minutes about some of the remarks which have been made. My colleague, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson), will be speaking later and may be dealing in a more substantive form with other points which have been raised this afternoon. I am curious to know why the hon. member for Prince Edward-Hastings (Mr. Hees) has given us the benefit of his experience on the basis of six years in government, because in those six years the economy of Canada was probably operated in a worse way than at any other time in our history. We are indebted to him for the advice he has given today.

**Mr. Hees:** That is exactly what we hear day after day. That is why the economy of this country is going straight to hell.