

to accept unemployment insurance and I think, Mr. Speaker, you have to agree that we really have a problem.

I suppose we are experiencing something entirely new in the history of our nation. Our people have been forced to endure a major economic recession and its resultant misery and poverty, deliberately caused by their government. As the Toronto *Telegram* so appropriately captioned a story in its February 24 edition, "It's Your Recession, Mr. Trudeau." Of course, we must not forget the Prime Minister's ally, the modern-day Robin Hood in reverse, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson). I think that most people who sit in this House and most people who fill the galleries know the contemptible arrogance displayed by the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and his cabinet, particularly the Minister of Finance, toward the problems facing Canadians, especially those who are unemployed and are forced to accept welfare.

I brought with me into the chamber some files containing letters I have received from constituents during the past three or four weeks. They are from people who have very serious problems. I will read one of them. It is from a woman who says:

My house is falling down. The room where my boy has to sleep isn't fit to live in. The walls are full of holes. The mattress on the bed is falling apart from dampness. We don't have enough bed clothes. I am getting \$120 a month to support my family.

I am sure other hon. members are getting letters like that. Here is another letter from a widow who is living with a mentally retarded daughter. She writes that she does not have a bed fit to sleep in, that the springs are popping up and that she has to put boards on the mattress. They do not have adequate clothing and their house is leaking.

These are gut issues, Mr. Speaker. My riding is not different from most ridings in Newfoundland. We have poverty in it and too much unemployment. Close to 100,000 people in my province are on some kind of welfare, whether short or long-term. These are the people at whom the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister shrug their shoulders in total indifference and say, "Fuddle-duddle." They act as if everything were going well. In fact, in his budget speech the Minister of Finance said we are on the move again and the economy is on the upswing.

• (5:50 p.m.)

I should like the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance to take time out and try to convince the people referred to in these files that things in Canada are on the upswing and are rosy, because I do not think that is the case. The Prime Minister and his ministers are not fooling the Canadian people; they are only fooling themselves. They are not being honest with the Canadian people when they try to put across the idea that things in Canada are rosy and that the economy is on the upswing.

I do not know how far people can be pushed or how much patience they can exercise. This government, I believe, has tried the patience of the Canadian people to

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the breaking point. I believe this is obvious, because it is not too difficult to sense that the government is running scared. Suddenly the Minister of Finance realizes his policy to curb inflation was illogical, stupid and senseless. Now the government is attempting to make amends by coming in with programs to offset some of the damage caused to the economy of this country by its senseless and illogical policies to fight the so-called war on inflation.

I do not know how much longer the Canadian people can endure this blundering in so far as the misery and poverty associated with unemployment is concerned, but I am convinced the day is not very far off when they will have their say. I think they will let it be known in no uncertain terms that they are not prepared to accept this hanky-panky of illogical policies on the part of their government. They will be heard, and there will be a change.

**Mr. Louis-Roland Comeau (South Western Nova):** Mr. Speaker, I came to the House this afternoon to speak on a subject which is of interest to me. I came here to listen to urban members speak on this subject and am surprised to see that members from the city of Montreal and the city of Quebec are not here to participate in this debate.

**Mr. Boulanger:** I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Richard):** Order, The hon. member is rising on a point of order.

[Translation]

**Mr. Boulanger:** Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member took the trouble to check up, he would realize that there are here a member from Montreal and one from Quebec. So he should weigh his words.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Richard):** The point of order is not justified. In any case, each member can establish his own figures. I recognize the hon. member for South Western Nova.

**Mr. Comeau:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like a government member to take part in the debate in order to tell us exactly what is going on in Montreal as this is of interest to us. And the Quebec member who, as minister, is sitting in the front row, could also outline the situation and propose some solution, as there are certainly problems in Montreal since the minister moved shortly before Christmas a bill to settle certain problems of the City of Montreal. There are therefore problems in that city.

[English]

We should hear from these people. Where is the former mayor of Toronto? He is not here.

**Some hon. Members:** Shame.

**Mr. Comeau:** Mr. Speaker, a member from Toronto proposed the motion this afternoon, and it is a very valid one. Some government members have wondered why he proposed such a motion and questioned its necessity. It is