

*The Budget—Mr. Stanfield*

refuge of the government practically every time anyone has asked the government a question.

The Prices and Incomes Commission, particularly the chairman, has been very concerned about the amount of unemployment that would be created, and the length of time it would take to bring inflation under control, if the country simply followed the methods that were being pursued by the Minister of Finance to avoid this situation. It was to avoid the creation of unnecessary unemployment that Dr. Young recommended an attempt to effect an agreement on the voluntary restraint program. It was precisely for that reason he made this recommendation, and he made that very clear. I suggest that Dr. Young's point of view has obviously never been accepted by the Minister of Finance. This kind of guideline of restraint approach was rejected by the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp) in 1967 when he was the Minister of Finance. It has been pooh-pooed a number of times by the Minister of Finance in the intervening years.

The Minister of Finance buried the program or pronounced the funeral oration last fall when he said it would fail, even before the Prices and Incomes Commission had launched it. As I understand it, the purpose of this measure proposed by the Prices and Incomes Commission was to avoid the creation of further unemployment in the fight against inflation. This commission has gone to a lot of trouble and Canadians in business, as well as labour leaders, have also gone to a lot of trouble to try to formulate an approach and program to avoid the deliberate creation of more unemployment. It is very clear that the Minister of Finance is making the efforts of the Prices and Incomes Commission abortive, while at the same time saying that his program is supporting the recommendations of that commission.

It is obvious that the department and the Minister of Finance on the one hand, and the Department of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and the Prices and Incomes Commission on the other hand are pursuing different objectives. I assume that however little faith the Minister of Finance may have in the efforts of the Prices and Incomes Commission, Dr. Young and his colleagues have the support of the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. It is pretty clear that there would be a serious split in the ranks of the government on this issue if they really under-

[Mr. Stanfield.]

stood what is going on and if they were not so preoccupied with some of the antics of the Postmaster General (Mr. Kierans).

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Stanfield:** Today we see alarming figures in relation to unemployment in the country. We know that in the United States, which has also been wrestling with the problem of inflation and is concerned about mounting unemployment, the authorities are starting to make moves designed to offset rising unemployment. Rather than making plans to inject more slack in the economy, the responsible authorities in the United States are considering something else.

I thought it was perfectly natural this afternoon, in light of these figures, to ask the Prime Minister a perfectly polite and reasonable question as to whether the Government of Canada was considering alternate measures under similar circumstances. What did I get for my pains? The right hon. Prime Minister's answer, which I hope does not reflect his attitude toward this problem—

**An hon. Member:** It does.

**Mr. Stanfield:** In view of the budget of the Minister of Finance and his announced intention to create more unemployment, certainly the attitude expressed by the Prime Minister here this afternoon is anything but cheerful news for the thousands and thousands of poor Canadians who are going to be unemployed because of the policies of this government.

**An hon. Member:** He will be eating some of that white paper.

**Mr. Hees:** They have a good job until the next election.

**Mr. Stanfield:** Let us consider the poor Minister of Regional Economic Expansion (Mr. Marchand). I am beginning to feel sorry for him. He is not here but he has been busy, he says, fighting regional economic disparity while his colleague the Minister of Finance and others have been busy increasing regional economic disparity.

The Minister of Finance may refer to his efforts to avoid this kind of problem by selective measures regarding government buildings in some areas of rapid growth. Some areas and cities, for example, Sault Ste. Marie, do not regard themselves as contributing to inflation. In any event, I do not think there is any evidence that the approach by this minister has been at all effective, and it