

*Economic Policies and Unemployment*

I come back to the mover, the hon. member for Sainte-Marie, whose speech was petty-minded. Moreover, the hon. member for Calgary North joined in that little game when he tried to discredit the Right Hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) who is travelling abroad.

I believe we can give credit to the Right Hon. Prime Minister for attending the sittings of this house regularly. If he is not present, it is because he is performing official functions, as all our prime ministers have had to do occasionally. I find it mean to make fun of that fact. Nevertheless, a tribute was inadvertently offered to him when it was said that he was "in". Obviously that is one tribute that cannot be offered to all opposition leaders, not even to those who were at one time premiers or prime ministers.

Narrow-mindedness was also shown by saying that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson) was arrogant, vain, heartless and had no charity nor any understanding of the needs of the people.

That speech was of a disconcerting barrenness because, instead of suggesting solutions to inflation which he deplores, the honourable member for Sainte-Marie wasted his time in partisan considerations and electioneering. He also went astray first of all through flagrant contradictions and then by insisting on making of his speech a vote-catching manoeuvre. As a matter of fact, did he not say at some point, that there is quite an obvious solution to inflation: it is to get our economy moving. This is self-evident. It is not difficult to stimulate our economy; everybody thinks of it when we are faced with inflation or unemployment. But some ten minutes later, he added: The most important priority is not economics but unemployment. So, where is the logic of the hon. member for Sainte-Marie? I wonder.

● (3:20 p.m.)

He then said:

The government should show more clearly that it is aware of the present climate.

Considering the emptiness of the remarks made by the hon. member for Sainte-Marie, I wonder how the truly constructive solutions of this government may be compared to his proposals. Besides, he did not propose anything at all, as the hon. member for Témiscamingue (Mr. Caouette) pointed out.

What did this government do to check inflation? It passed a great number of meas-

[Mr. Mongrain.]

ures that I shall enumerate in a moment. Before doing so, I should like to put forth three principles.

In an economic climate such as ours, first we have to ask ourselves what the economic situation would be, had not the present government taken these drastic and bold measures and then how does the economic situation in Canada compare with that of other countries of the Western hemisphere? Finally, another rather infrequent phenomenon must be acknowledged. Indeed, we are presently living in a kind of period of transition between two generations. I should say a kind of cultural and economic explosion between two generations, which makes the problem of inflation facing almost every country in the world still more complicated.

Having said this, I should like to list briefly the concrete measures adopted by this government to contain inflation and cut it short. I shall be very brief, because I do not intend to ask the House for extra time, and I want to allow other members to make their own comments.

What has the government done? It has established designated areas in order to eliminate regional disparities. It has also designated special areas, to assist municipalities in supplying services which permit economic growth. I am referring here to the Industrial Development Bank which for many years has been helping companies to survive and develop.

The government has implemented programs to retrain workmen who can then relocate when they can no longer earn their living in their own region. It has created training programs everywhere in the country to increase academic levels and the technical skills of the unemployed so that they can find regular employment.

The government has also been granting loans to small industries for many years and is still doing so with satisfactory regularity.

The new textile policy is designed to help that industry to withstand somewhat better competition from the under-developed countries is now another good measure. The members opposite are criticizing the tax reform now proposed by the Minister of Finance precisely because they are not happy to see that 3 million Canadians will pay less taxes. They are not happy to see that, for the first time in Canadian history, the Minister of Finance is introducing a year and a half before the legislation is passed, tax reform proposals and is