

fight against poverty, fight against unemployment, fight against inflation. But the more the government fights those problems, the greater they become.

Madam Speaker, I could almost ask the Minister of Finance to cease fighting, since the more he fights, the worse things turn out. Maybe the time has come when we should look for other solutions, and find out the causes of that excessive and overly rapid unemployment rise and all the resulting problems.

In 1966, I believe, the Economic Council of Canada declared that a yearly 2 per cent rate of inflation and price increases could be termed acceptable. Our annual rate of inflation now is about 12 per cent. This is unacceptable. It annihilates the results of every federal, provincial, municipal, corporate or individual undertaking.

Inflation is robbery, because it deprives the worker of purchasing power, and mainly because it destroys his savings. It is no longer possible to put money aside for bad years, because inflation destroys revenues that could be gained from savings. Inflation destroys not only revenues, but savings. Solutions have long been overdue in this area.

Housing is a real disaster. Housing starts declined to catastrophic levels, and in a few months rents will be on the upswing because housing will become increasingly scarce. The Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Danson) travels across Canada, making speeches and statements before almost every builders' and financial clubs or associations. He keeps repeating that the government is trying to increase housing starts. Obviously this has no effect on builders or those in need of housing, for the simple reason that people cannot afford the ever higher cost of those houses. We have one more disaster there, and I find it hard to believe that government measures announced by the Minister of Finance and by the Minister of Urban Affairs will spur housing starts, or that some day every Canadian will own his own house.

This brings me to the main point of my remarks, poverty. It has been plaguing us for quite some time. I have here reports dating from 1963. This one by Maurice Huot appeared in *Le Droit* of Ottawa; it indicates official agencies have been set up to eliminate poverty or rather hide it.

As University of Alberta vice-president Malcolm Taylor said in 1963 at the 43rd Annual Convention of the Canadian Welfare Council: the poor are still with us in Canada. The Ontario Federation of Labour, at a convention in October of 1964, stated after an inquiry:

Almost 2,500,000 Canadians, in other words, over 13 per cent of the population, live . . .

—or lived, at that time—

. . . in dire poverty, and 1,500,000 others barely survive.

The report added:

. . . 2,500,000 other Canadians lack comfort or some of the basic needs.

That was in 1964.

● (1700)

Now, in 1975, despite all the achievements of science, we face situations far worse than that. Indeed, while about 13 per cent of Canadians then lived in extreme poverty, their numbers reach roughly 20 per cent today. In a recent report published by the Canadian Welfare Council on poor

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children, we are told that 25 per cent of all children in Canada live in poverty. I shall come back to this later on.

Now, Madam Speaker, let us go back to 1963-64. I have here the statement of a journalist, since then become minister, made precisely before the Canadian Welfare Council. On May 30, 1963, one could read the following news in *La Presse*:

Taking offence at the sight of the poor who still dare exist, modern society covers its face not to see them.

The editor-in-chief of *La Presse* at that time, Mr. Gérard Pelletier, made that statement:

. . . to a specialized audience, the members of the Canadian Welfare Council, at the dinner which brought to a close the council's annual general assembly.

Mr. Pelletier reproached them their modesty and silence, claiming that they should cry out and shock the public with the scandal of poverty in Canada.

"Misery in Canada will not disappear before it becomes unbearable to most Canadians. For the time being, we can live very well with it, thank you."

"The fact that there is no research being carried out into the possible ways of destroying it is due proof that we accept it. Where are the social laboratories we need, where scientists well provided with tools and funds would try to identify its causes and propose remedies, just as physicians by the thousands are doing now with cancer and rheumatism?"

Would poverty be a sickness?

"Poverty disturbs us whenever we think about it, but this is something which happens to us less and less."

Later on, the *La Presse* editor added:

" . . . Let us admit it, we have removed poverty and those who are faced with it from society; we have surreptitiously established, through the indirect means of bank accounts and the idea of solvency, a system of segregation as implacable as that instituted by racist southerners, although it may not seem quite so odious at first glance."

At the time, the newspaperman who made this statement was the editor of the Montreal newspaper *La Presse*. He is a minister now, but we no longer hear from him the type of statements he used to make as a newspaperman. Yet, he had been blaming the Canadian Welfare Council "for not crying out loud enough". Well, although the very same Canadian Welfare Council has cried out very loud and still does, the government remains unfeeling.

Another one, who made a splendid speech in 1964 as a member of parliament, is also a minister now.

The hon. member for Vancouver Centre (Mr. Basford) had said that—

. . . in many areas in Canada there are nuclei of poverty where people derive very few advantages from the present social security legislation. "Within this affluent society we live in, when we have never had it so good, there is a group of people who are in dire need of government aid," . . .

He had made this statement before the Liberal National Council. He is a high official, Madam Speaker, who apparently would have a lot to say in the present Cabinet. What is poverty? Professor Gosselin answers:

Poverty is the situation people are in when, owing to lack of resources, they cannot reasonably satisfy needs that are considered essential according to standards and values determined by the environment they live in. According to those standards, the needs and services regarded as necessary for a minimum decent life are not within the reach of the poor, are beyond their material circumstances and cannot be satisfied by the resources available to them.