

Anti-Inflation Policies

all of us are extremely concerned. I was impressed by the first page of the introduction to this issue. Speaking about Hamilton, in particular, the council said:

In 1969, between 15,000 and 16,000 families in metropolitan Hamilton were in poverty. Metro Hamilton is an important urban concentration, the second largest metropolitan area in Ontario, the most populous province. The problems of the Hamilton area are worthy of consideration because in Hamilton we have a modern industrial economic base. This is the steel centre of Canada. It is an area of a high level of economic activity. And it is evidence that such a high level of activity, important as it is, is not by itself the total solution to the problems of poverty. Other areas suffer from a poverty related to economic underdevelopment, a poverty of the past. The poverty existing in Hamilton is the poverty of a modern industrial city, the kind of poverty we can expect in other areas that are in the process of beginning to industrialize. Unless appropriate measures are taken to end poverty, ours is the poverty of the future, the poverty of a developed region.

When we talk about 15,000 or 16,000 families, would I be wrong in relating such a figure to 45,000 people? So the policies of the government designed to fight inflation are reflected in the city of Hamilton in the situation in which 45,000 people find themselves. I was concerned about unemployment during the last election and I am concerned about it now. I am even more concerned than I was, because it seems to me no headway has been made in improving the quality of life experienced by many Canadians. Instead, the quality of life is deteriorating because of the callous, unsympathetic, complacent attitude which this government has constantly shown.

Recently I read in one of the national dailies something which is very significant because it is possibly an indication of the government's intentions. I read that employable welfare cases have increased by 40 per cent since March, 1969, in metropolitan Toronto. This is attributed to recent unemployment stemming from government anti-inflationary policies. One can conclude that figures of this kind are applicable to municipalities, towns and villages across the country in proportion to their population. No wonder the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Munro) wanted \$1 billion in addition to the \$3.5 billion he receives now. Perhaps he knows that the policy of the government in creating unemployment means it is saying: Line up at the welfare offices if there is room, and if there is no room there line up at the unemployment offices.

An hon. Member: Or the soup kitchens.

[Mr. Alexander.]

Mr. Alexander: Or the soup kitchens. Do we not realize that when people are spending their time at welfare offices and employment offices, receiving much less than ordinary endeavour and initiative would bring them, the environmental malaise, particularly in urban areas, is drastically increased? I am thinking about drug addiction, suicide, alcoholism, juvenile delinquency, marital discord and all the other social ills and problems which are complementary to the urban expansion. What concerns me is that the urban explosion in terms of increasing population is accelerating daily. Yet the government tells us the proper thing to do is create unemployment, although the administration is pursuing policies which, according to real experts, are unwarranted.

This reckless complacency on the part of the government adds to the frustration, the anxiety and the suffering of those who are at the bottom of the economic ladder. It appears to me that the policy of the government is designed to find out how best to confuse, how best to frustrate the people of Canada. Look at our first citizens, the Indians. They have no hope, they have no faith in this government. Look at the farmers. I am not a farmer, but surely the government is in trouble—

An hon. Member: Both east and west.

Mr. Alexander: —both east and west. As far as the fishermen are concerned, I can say the same thing. What about the old age pensioners, all those who are living on fixed incomes, those who because of a lack of wherewithal or the necessary training in an age of accelerated technological advance have been unable to keep pace? They are being strangled economically. Now there is a further group amounting to about 542,000 people, the unemployed, added to this list—another 6.7 per cent added to those who are already frustrated and who have no reason for liking this government. Mr. Speaker, it seems there can hardly be anyone left after I have run down that long list of areas and people.

● (9:00 p.m.)

There is no concrete evidence to show these people that it is worth their while to continue to place their confidence in the government. There is nothing of great significance which would warrant showering the government with accolades and plugs. The cold fact is that these people are interested in the quality of life, but apparently the government is not. These people are experiencing a deteriorating