

Speech from the Throne

concentrate on future plans. If we look at this matter of allowing people to live and the record of the government in terms of human frustration and alienation, we can readily understand why all of us wait with baited breath his announcement of the next election.

• (1220)

Just let me point out the dismal failure of the government in certain areas, and this must be repeated and repeated again because these are the issues about which people are concerned. This government is possessed of certain highs, such as high taxes, the high number of bankruptcies and lay-offs, the high payment they gave to old age pensioners amounting to 42 cents, and high unemployment. At present 665,000 are unemployed. The Prime Minister has said this is a regrettable side effect of the government's fiscal and monetary policies. What concerns me is the fact that those who are deserving and should be rewarded are not considered. There is the case of Mr. Vallières. For the life of me I do not know what was the philosophy behind hiring him, particularly when I hear the then Minister of Labour condone such action and tell us that this type of person is more worthy than Lord knows how many unemployed of whom there are about 10 per cent to 12 per cent in the province of Quebec. The minister has condoned this action and I for one do not accept it. This is the kind of climate in which we are living as a result of this government's involvement with the destiny of the people of Canada.

We have also had lows. There is the low in the confidence of Canadians in the government. There is the alienation that exists in the west. We all know about that because we have all travelled out west. There is also the alienation that exists in central Canada as a result of the rigidity of this government, and the alienation that exists in the Atlantic provinces as a result of this government being bankrupt of ideas to solve or reduce regional economic disparities.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Alexander: Of course there is also a new low in Canada-United States relations. But then I wonder what we can expect when we find that the Prime Minister on an overseas tour registered some concern vis-à-vis our American friends when he stated that he fears a cultural, economic and military take-over by that country. This is the gist of the message. We cannot wonder then at this new low in U.S.-Canadian relations and at the fact that Canadians have to suffer a little pain. We should reiterate and re-emphasize to our American friends that we are their best trading customers. We must tell them that if we have to suffer any pain they in turn will suffer pain also as a result of their economic policies that hamstring us.

I should like to make a few comments with regard to the employment record of this government. The Prime Minister, in his reply to the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) the other day, had much to say about gloom and doom. Surely it is the role of the opposition to point out the inadequacies and failures of this government. If in our words there is gloom, perhaps there is need for gloom when there are some 665,000 people out of work. It is not only the individual who is out of work that we have to consider but, as I have stated continually, we have to go

down the ladder and consider the bus driver, the taxicab driver, the corner grocery store owner and the small businessmen whose livelihood depends on the income or lack of it of the 665,000. We get confused and we say that there are only 665,000 people out of work, but this is the nitty-gritty of our economic stability because without these people being able to purchase goods and services the economy founders.

On page 2 of *Hansard* for February 17, 1972 there is a reference in the Throne Speech to "our success . . . in the creation of new jobs". The next day the Prime Minister expanded on this theme and said:

The large number of new jobs being created in Canada should not be overlooked.

If anyone is overlooking anything, it is the Prime Minister; he is the one who is ignoring facts. The Economic Council of Canada has estimated that during the period from 1970 to 1975 the rate of employment growth needed to absorb the labour force growth and to reduce unemployment to about 4 per cent would be about 3.3 per cent per year. In 1970 employment increased by 1.3 per cent, and in 1971 employment increased by 2.5 per cent. Only 299,000 jobs were created in 1970 and 1971 together—a mere 21 per cent of the 1.4 million we need by 1975. Accordingly, there is a gap of 1.1 million jobs to be bridged in the next three years if we are to reduce unemployment to a more acceptable level.

What does this shortfall in job creation mean in human terms? It means that only 64 per cent of all labour force entrants in the past two years have found jobs. It means that only half of all men entering the labour force between the beginning of 1970 and the end of 1971 found jobs. It means that only 46 per cent of all young people entering the labour force in these two years found jobs, which is tragic, to say the very least.

Since the Prime Minister took office at the beginning of May, 1968, employment has risen by 5.5 per cent, the labour force has shot up by 9 per cent and consequently unemployment has almost doubled, rising from 366,000 in May, 1968, to the present figure of 665,000 in January, 1972. This is the record on which the Prime Minister wants to stand. This is the record about which he boasts.

The Prime Minister admonishes Canadians not to overlook:

. . . the fact that, between 1965 and 1970—the last period for which statistics are available—over one million new jobs were created in Canada.

Perhaps this is the problem with the government's policies on unemployment. The Prime Minister is now aware that Canada's employment and unemployment figures are available right up to January, 1972, and consequently he is acting on the basis of long outdated figures. Canada's job creation, the Prime Minister continues, was much faster than in other countries between 1965 and 1970. Maybe this is true, but few other countries in the world have a labour force growth as rapid as Canada's and few have an unemployment rate as high as Canada's.

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development published in May, 1970, their projections for needed employment growth in their member countries between 1970 and 1975. These projections show that Canada was far ahead of all other industrial countries in