

Anti-Inflation Policies

ment is creating or confirming instability and unrest in many parts of Canada. Unemployment is creating an explosive situation. Young people are out of school and out of work. One startling feature of the most recent unemployment statistics is that they reveal the degree to which younger Canadians are being forced to start what would normally be their working lives without jobs. Particularly when one considers the extent of social criticism and dissatisfaction among the young today, this unemployment for the young is an invitation to disorder. Consider the difficulty students are going to have finding summer employment under these conditions.

The same would be the case if unemployment were disproportionately high—as we must assume it is—among native people, and others who already feel they are the victims of prejudice. It is an unhappy fact of life that many of the native people of Canada live in areas where growth is slow and jobs are few. Since the effect of the government's policy to deliberately create unemployment is particularly harsh in regions of this kind, we must assume that the proportion of unemployed native people is higher than the proportion of unemployed Canadians generally.

Sometimes people accuse this government of a lack of respect for tradition but I think it sometimes shows too much respect for tradition. Indeed, in one area at least I think the Prime Minister is trying to recreate the past, unemployment and all. One hears of the possibility of the government creating a poverty council, the aim of which would be to spread poverty evenly across the country with special attention to areas of slow growth. If this were to be done the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson) would be an appropriate adviser on theory.

This is a government policy which is cruel and inappropriate. It is not only harmful to the people who are unemployed today. It amounts to a serious attack upon the prospect of development in many of the slow growth regions of the country. It amounts to an invitation to the young and the dispossessed to protest, and the old to give up in frustration in whatever way is at hand. It is a policy destructive of human dignity, destructive of social order, destructive of national unity and development. It is a policy which suits the theorists in the East Block, and no one else. It is a policy which must be reversed.

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, the motion before the House draws attention to the recent level of

unemployment and to slow economic growth in Canada. I think it is significant that nearly all of the opposition days have been devoted to the lamentable condition of the Canadian economy. That is because when members in all parts of the House return to their constituencies they find this to be the number one issue. There can be no doubt that the Canadian economy is in serious trouble.

First of all, there are all the signs of an economic slow down. Even the budget of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson) predicted a one and a half to two per cent drop from the 4.8 per cent growth in 1969. This means that in this year, by the minister's own figure, we will probably have a reduced growth rate in real terms of 2.8 to 3 per cent. That contrasts very poorly with the recommendation of the Economic Council of Canada that we require a real growth rate of 5.5 per cent to 6.5 per cent if we are to maintain full employment in this country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Athabasca on a point of order.

Mr. Yewchuk: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I should like to point out to the House that when this very important issue is being discussed there are only four government members in the House.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: That is hardly a point of order. The hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands.

Mr. Muir (Cape Breton-The Sydneys): There are no ministers.

Mr. Greene: I just sit back here so that I can have a better perspective.

• (3:20 p.m.)

Mr. Muir (Cape Breton-The Sydneys): You don't have any say, Joe.

Mr. Dinsdale: That is so, Joe.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): The state of the economy is shown further by the fact that we now have an unemployment rate of 6.7 per cent, the highest we have had in Canada for some six years; and that is certainly the highest rate of any industrialized nation in the western world. Professor Seymour Friedland, Director of Capital Markets Research Program at York University, said this recently:

The question is no longer whether we are going to have a recession—we already have a recession—but how serious the recession will be.