

Anti-Inflation Policies

The article reads in part as follows, and I quote:

• (5:50 p.m.)

Who is responsible for unemployment? Who can check it? Ottawa or Quebec?

Mr. Jean Pellerin stated last Friday that unemployment is "a continental phenomenon that no single effort can counteract to a worthwhile extent". According to the editorial writer of *La Presse*, nobody, so to speak, is to blame for the increased unemployment. This shows a somewhat surprising indulgence for the former members of *Cité Libre*—more especially as, according to the Minister of Finance himself, the central government expected its deflationary policies to curtail an increasing number of jobs.

Mr. Speaker: I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but I must remind him that his time has expired. He can only continue with the unanimous consent of the House.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Ricard: I thank you, Mr. Speaker, and also the members opposite.

In conclusion, Mr. Lemelin said, and I quote:

After all, were Ottawa following at this time a policy of full employment, the rate of unemployment would probably reach 6 per cent at the most in the province of Quebec. Now, at mid-March, 9.2 per cent of the Quebec labour force were unemployed. It is, therefore, difficult not to blame the Trudeau government for the unemployment of approximately 90,000 Quebecers—namely 4.0 per cent of the labour force.

This is a tremendous figure. And, under the circumstances, this is equivalent to brinkmanship.

During this debate, several government members only criticized and found rather strange that the opposition took advantage of this day allocated to them to discuss the matter of unemployment and place the responsibility on the government.

According to the Liberal government, which takes the responsibility for unemployment, the opposition should do nothing that may incur blame. Now, it is the duty of any opposition which has the welfare of the Canadian people at heart to seize every opportunity to criticize the policy or lack of policy of the government. It is a mainly constructive criticism which, we hope, will shake the government a little out of the inertness in which it is wallowing at the moment, for the misfortune of the unemployed.

One has to know several families suffering from unemployment to realize to what extent the government must make every effort to bring forth solutions likely to provide jobs for those willing to work.

[Mr. Ricard.]

Talking with a mother who cannot clothe and feed her children and trying to comfort such a family is distressing. Even if it were to cost the Canadian people a few dollars to do away with that curse, I doubt that the government would be blamed by the people. But, on the contrary, if unemployment persists, it will harm not only the families concerned but national unity.

I urge the government to use every possible means to put an end to the curse of unemployment, so that those families that are now in dire straits can again live normally as they are entitled to.

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): Before the member for Saint-Hyacinthe closes his remarks, I should like to put the following question to him: What would you suggest to the government, what is your policy, and that of your party—

Mr. Speaker: Order! The hon. member knows that he must speak to the Chair and that he cannot ask his questions directly to the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe.

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe what he thinks, what is his policy and what solutions he has in mind in order, as he said himself, to curb inflation. I should like to point out to the House that the opposition never made any concrete proposals to us—

Mr. Speaker: In that case, the hon. member cannot make a speech. He can ask a question only provided he has the unanimous consent of the House, since the time allowed the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe has expired. The question being asked, the hon. member could perhaps give a concise answer.

Mr. Ricard: Yes, in a few minutes only, Mr. Speaker. As a quick solution, I should ask the hon. member for Saint-Boniface first to exert pressures on the Prime Minister so as to have him limit his own staff instead of expanding it, and reduce also the extravagant expenditures going on in some departments, for office furnishings for instance and finally to reconsider the establishment of Information Canada. That agency is getting ready to squander money and if the hon. member would only agree to exert such pressures, I believe the unemployed would be most grateful to him.