

Alleged Failure to Reduce Unemployment

work to the people who will soon be on the labour market. In my opinion, that would be very beneficial to our country. We must not only think of taxation.

Mr. Speaker, when I meet workers, farmers or wage earners who make just enough to live, I find it difficult to understand how it is possible to tax them. The necessities of life are being taxed. The taxing of luxuries is immaterial but now even the necessities of life are taxed. And those poor people are told: "You do not invest, that is why we are not getting anywhere".

Well, there is a great deal of unrest, and not in the lower layers of society. It prevails at higher levels and the ministers know it very well. If the Minister of Finance wanted to be frank, he would tell us to what extent he is the servant of those trusts which are crushing our population today. He knows it, but he cannot talk. People today tend to rebel, especially the younger ones, because our generation is less rebellious since they are used to be pushed around. But the young people today are more aware of the problem. They are more revolutionary than we are because they are more reluctant to live like outcasts in an affluent country. I think the government has something to do and must seriously consider the matter. It must stop dealing adversely with the economy. I have been told that the economy should always promote the welfare of the population, rather than the interests of the trusts of the country. When we decide to achieve the proper goal of the economy, especially as far as the human being is concerned, we shall then be able to say that we have a democratic government and that we can at last live in a better society.

[English]

Hon. Bryce S. Mackasey (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, faced with an amendment to the motion, I would like to say just a few words on the amendment. I think I speak not only for myself but for all members of the Liberal party when I say that this government at no time in its fiscal and monetary policy has deliberately set out to increase unemployment as a solution to the problems that face this nation. I think there is nobody in this house, let alone in this party, who appreciates unemployment. It exists. It is something with which we are occupied. It is a problem about which we are determined to do something. It is such a grave and serious problem that we are determined to have the

[Mr. Gauthier.]

courage to introduce permanent solutions to unemployment rather than ad hoc solutions that are designed more to alleviate the plight of the unemployed, to provide them temporarily with financial assistance. I will have a little more to say on that point, Mr. Speaker. But I think I should make it very clear that nobody in this government has any objective in mind other than to reduce the incidence of unemployment.

A great deal has been said today by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) and the official spokesman for the New Democratic party about unemployment. If you were a newcomer to the house and were sitting in the gallery, you might have been left with the impression that unemployment was something we had deliberately created, or that had never before existed in the economy of the country. So, this afternoon I took the trouble to look at the relevant unemployment figures. I found to my amazement that 1963, the very best year when the Conservative party was in power, was worse than the worst year under a Liberal regime since 1963.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Mackasey: I have here facts and figures to substantiate this statement. I dislike statistics, but they have been used in quantity today so I will put these figures on the record.

• (5:00 p.m.)

In 1958 the rate of unemployment in Canada was 7 per cent; in 1959, 6 per cent; in 1960, 7 per cent; in 1961, 7.1 per cent; in 1962, 5.9 per cent. In 1963, we reduced those figures to 5.5 per cent; in 1964, to 4.7 per cent; in 1965, to 3.9 per cent; in 1966, to 3.6 per cent; in 1967, to 4.1 per cent; in 1968, to 4.8 per cent. These are the figures of the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, and I think they speak for themselves. I must emphasize that the lowest figure between 1958 and 1962 was 5.9 per cent.

We came to office in 1963 face with that challenge. The Liberal party having successfully rectified the situation then is quite capable of doing it again under the dynamic leadership of the present Prime Minister of Canada.

Allusions have been made today, with a great degree of validity, to the plight of the maritimes. I have a tie with the maritimes; it is not a strange land to me. However, I would like to read the record of unemployment in the Atlantic regions between 1958 and 1962. I