

The Address—Hon. M. Lambert

Yet the minister is speaking on behalf of a ministry which has absolutely no jurisdiction over the tar sands or over the development of them. Only the government of the province of Alberta or its appropriate agency, the energy conservation board, has any say about whether a shovel will be put into the ground. There is no doubt that the federal government can tax the product in the end, but as for the development and the marketing of any oil produced it cannot say one thing about one barrel or drop marketed within the province of Alberta.

If anybody should think that the federal government is able to move unilaterally into the development, or participate in the development, of those tar sands within the confines of the province of Alberta without the consent and co-operation of that province, then there is absolutely something wrong with their thinking. The federal government could no more do this than they could say they were going to develop a gold mine in the province of Quebec without the consent and co-operation of that province. The permits would have to be issued by the appropriate government, which would be the government of the province of Quebec in that case. Yet we seem to be assuming that this kind of development will be done unilaterally.

I wanted to talk about inflation, Mr. Speaker. This morning the minister seemed to say that he had pulled out all the stops and touched all the bases of sympathy regarding the effects of inflation. But the net result has been that the government has not done a thing effectively to counter inflation.

Let me just take a look at the situation. In 1968, when the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and his then administration took office, the consumer price index for all items stood at 120.1. In October of 1972, when this particular administration took over again, the consumer price index stood at 142.0. By January of this year it had risen to 157.6. When the minister became Minister of Finance in January of 1972 it stood at 136.7.

I can go down through various items, such as food and shelter. Food stood at 122.0 in 1968, in 1972, October, it had risen to 145.3, and in January of 1974 it was 174.0. Shelter in 1968 stood at 124.6, increased to 160.5 in October 1972 and in January of 1974 stood at 173.8. We have seen increases each year.

Let us look at the performance of the minister, and particularly at this self-congratulatory budget of which he spoke. He must have sprained his shoulder patting himself so hard on the back for his predictions and for the measures taken by the government in 1973.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): That budget speaks for itself.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): Yes, Mr. Speaker, it certainly does.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Look at the results.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): Let us look at the increase in the price index. In the first quarter of 1973 the increase was 5.9 per cent over the preceding quarter. In the second quarter it was 7.3 per cent; in the third quarter 8.2 per cent, and in the fourth quarter 9 per cent. So, it

[Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West).]

speaks for itself. The rate of increase has been not quite double.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): What about the increase in jobs?

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): I am glad the minister reminded me of that.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): And growth.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): Jobs are the most artificial statistic you could possibly have. Because there is no indication how long a job lasts. An individual can come on a job that lasts two weeks, stand down, and then a new person is hired in the same job. Statistically that is classified as a new employment.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Oh, come on.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): The minister shakes his head but he knows that is true. There is no true measure of jobs other than by putting some measure on the length of a job before it can be considered a new job; for example, that an employment shall last for three months or six months. I defy the minister to say that that is the criterion at the present time, because I know it is not. As a matter of fact, these job starts can be as artificial as a rolling engagement of one week—a start and a stop, a start and a stop. These are all classified as new jobs.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): That is not the way it works, Marcel.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): It certainly does.

Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): There have been almost half a million new jobs.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): The minister says half a million. With our mobility of labour today, with stops and starts, summer jobs, and so forth and so on, these are all part and parcel. You would never see, Mr. Speaker, such a collection of garbage can items as you see in this particular statistic relating to new jobs.

Mr. Baker: Just like the budget speech.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): The minister spent a great deal of time deriding the Conservative position on an incomes policy, saying it does not work here and does not work there. On the other hand, he cited with great self-satisfaction, and out of context, the last report of the OECD. I had the privilege of participating in the debate in Strasbourg with Mr. Van Lennep of OECD on this self-same report, and I invite the minister to read the whole of Mr. Van Lennep's commentaries about Canada and the dangerous situation prevailing here.

The minister spent a lot of time this morning saying it was too bad that people do lose their life savings, pension and insurance plans and all that when we have inflation at a rate of 9 per cent to 10 per cent this year. The decks were awash with the minister's tears. He referred to the inflation rate in England, their value added tax and so forth. I was in England this year and I know what the situation is. I was on the continent as well and they do have inflation.