

Anti-Inflation Policies

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member but his time has expired, unless he has unanimous consent to continue.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The hon. member for Cape Breton-The Sydneys (Mr. Muir).

Mr. Muir (Cape Breton-The Sydneys): I wish to thank hon. members of the House for giving me a few moments; I shall not abuse that privilege. This pamphlet to which I was referring contains this paragraph:

In the meantime, however, it will be difficult to avoid temporary but painful side-effects—higher unemployment and a loss of production affecting every region of Canada.

That is a profound statement! I should know this character who heads up the Prices and Incomes Commission because I have seen him so often on television. He really has a job for himself. He is going to make up the Canadian content for television that Pierre Juneau is going to enforce before too long. Let us have some action from him. Let him do something as head of the Prices and Incomes Commission. I would appreciate it if this great wonder from the west would really do something apart from making these unrealistic speeches of his in which he damns labour. The government, of course, does the same thing. Every opportunity they get they damn labour and the unions. They have no time for either. The same policy is being followed by this Commission.

With regard to this statement by the Commission, I should like to ask to whom these side-effects are going to be painful. Are they going to be painful to Mr. Young, or to the Prime Minister, or to the cabinet ministers of this government? No, they are not. Higher unemployment will not affect them. I suppose the government wishes the unemployed to tell their children, when they ask for shoes and for the bare necessities of life, to adopt the motto of Mr. Young and company, which I suggest should be hung up on the wall so these children can see it when they are trying to get themselves a meal.

There is criticism throughout the country of this government's rigid policy which has brought many areas to the brink of recession. The Fredericton *Daily Gleaner* for April 20 had this to say:

In the Atlantic provinces, where the unemployment rate has for decades been greater than that of the rest of the nation, the policy of economic restraint is pushing unemployment to intolerable levels.

[Mr. Muir (Cape Breton-The Sydneys).]

There are, moreover, increasing doubts that policies which tend to reduce production can really be the right remedy for inflation, which by definition is a condition in which demand exceeds supply or "too many dollars chasing too few goods." The flaw in the remedy is particularly obvious in areas like the Atlantic provinces where production standards and totals were already below rational or acceptable standards.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I am a long way from being an economist, but I always felt that inflation could be defeated without creating massive unemployment. It would appear that economists throughout the country agree. The President of the Treasury Board smiles. He does not really seem to be upset about unemployment, and this is the traditional attitude of the government; they are not too excited about it. I would ask the President of the Treasury Board to consider the thinking of these economists who have stated that it is not necessary to have unemployment to fight inflation.

I make that appeal to the minister. I suppose my words will fall on deaf ears, but I am told that the minister has a lot of influence in the cabinet. Certainly, he must have some influence in crushing labour unions and working hardships on labour, so I presume he must have some influence among the seats of power in the government. Therefore, I appeal to the government to cease this headlong plunge into policies which I feel cannot but bring hardship to the unemployed of this country and their dependants.

Having started on this downward spiral, how are we going to stop it? I observe in the House this afternoon the hon. member for Carleton-Charlotte (Mr. Flemming) who, as the House knows, was formerly the premier of the province of New Brunswick. When a previous Liberal government instituted a tight money policy, one of their many infamous policies, he asked the then federal government with regard to the policies it was applying, if a man had 10 children—and we have ten provinces in Canada—and he had to apply a remedy to fight a case of constipation, would he give all of his children a dose of castor oil? Would he treat them all the same? This seems to be the remedy that the government is applying right across the country from Newfoundland to British Columbia. In some of the underprivileged areas of Canada, such as in the Atlantic provinces, portions of Quebec, parts of the west and Ontario, this remedy would not have any effect.

One is all right, of course, if one lives in that stretch between Windsor, Toronto and