

The Budget—Mr. Comeau

• (8:40 p.m.)

In the last place I would mention—this is No. 6—a guaranteed industry which goes with a guaranteed income. We cannot have one without the other. Guaranteed industry means stopping all this business of trying to seduce private industry to come in here, there and everywhere and start up enterprises thanks to government handouts and incentives, and then the government thinking it has done its job. What the government will have to learn, and the other public authorities, federal, provincial and municipal, is that where private industry cannot provide goods or services because a venture is not profitable, the government, the public authority, will have to step in and do it.

I shall conclude my remarks in a moment, Mr. Speaker. These are the things we should be doing. These things should be in the budget. But on the contrary, this budget means a do-nothing drift for the country; it means disappointment and disillusionment for the great majority of people, and deepening despair for thousands who can see no way out. We in this party have no choice but to oppose to the best of our ability this retreat from even the idea of a just society.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Louis-Roland Comeau (South Western Nova): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for Trois-Rivières (Mr. Mongrain) who dealt with problems very similar to those I will discuss tonight. He spoke of the textile industry, and of Air Canada, as did also several other members.

[*English*]

Mr. Speaker, I rise to take part in this debate through the courtesy of my colleagues, the hon. member for Halifax-East Hants (Mr. McCleave) and the hon. member for Dartmouth-Halifax East (Mr. Forrestall). The relative importance of the loss of industrial capacity as a result of changing defence policy as has been evidenced in Nova Scotia, particularly in Dartmouth, coupled with the fact that only one of us could speak, has persuaded them to let me have this place, and I thank them and their constituents.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Comeau: Had they spoken, I am sure they would have made observations with respect to defence matters, transportation, probably the Post Office and other important matters. Mr. Speaker, many developments

[*Mrs. MacInnis.*]

have occurred recently which really make one wonder whether these are the results of a sensible policy of the government, whether politics are involved, or what is going on. I refer to recent policies of various departments which are widening, not narrowing, the gap between various regions of Canada. I will enumerate them later. The budget, which is the most recent of these announcements, certainly adds to this.

It is very clear that the budget speech delivered by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson), who was told to do so by the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), will create further unemployment. What concerns me is that once again the government hits at the low-income groups; once again they hit the poorer people; once again they hit the least literate and the uneducated people; once again the Prime Minister hits at the rural people; once again the pensioners are getting a beating; once again the Prime Minister considers his just society just for the rich; once again the young people are forced to migrate to the cities, but now only to find that the prospects for prosperity and richness are not so rosy there either. This time our young and vigorous rural people go to the cities to become welfare recipients.

There is no problem with the rich, the well-to-do, the highly skilled and educated. However, it is interesting to note that even university graduates are facing difficulties. I could supply the House with specific examples, but will refrain from doing so. It is true that the Department of Regional Economic Expansion has been established. It is also true that it has helped many industries in various parts of Canada, and I thank the minister for what he has done. I would also add that we might be worse off had his department not made money available. I should say that the efforts of the minister and his department are being undermined by the efforts of his colleagues. They do not give a darn about unemployment, Mr. Speaker; they do not give a darn about rural Canada. They have been told to cut back by the Prime Minister.

Let me illustrate by giving specific cases. We have the case of the Postmaster General (Mr. Kierans). Mr. Speaker, I do not know what to say about him. He certainly has no concern for the people and no concern for postal services. Somebody remarked the other day that so-and-so had been the worst Postmaster General until this one came along. I am wondering what would have happened if this fellow had been elected Prime Minister. I