

Income Tax

Often we forget about the problems of unemployment. It is all well and good to say that there are a million unemployed in Canada. If you are not unemployed, it does not mean very much to you. What happens to a person when he is laid off today? It is not like the old days during the depression when people could return to the farms. Another cup of water could always be put into the soup. Today that is not the case. People live in the cities and they have payments to make on their houses, cars, boats and television sets. The government had led them to believe that everyone is entitled to a fair share in society.

When people are laid off today their standards of living must change. The days go by very quickly, and the time arrives when there is no more unemployment insurance benefits for them. Although these people walk the streets of the resource communities, there are no jobs. Even the most menial jobs are not available. People have to decide to pull up their socks and leave their communities in an attempt to seek employment elsewhere.

Where can Canadians find employment which they are qualified for when their experience has been in mining, bush work, sheet metal work, veneer factories, smelters or foundries? When people were receiving a fair wage at their jobs and suddenly they have to leave their community and go elsewhere, without any qualifications, they are faced with thousands and thousands of other people looking for work. It must be the most demoralizing thing which can happen to people and their families.

What happens to young people when they are unemployed today? The Liberal government has told people that Canada is a very rich land and is strong. They have used other expressions and have "b-ss'd" people for many years.

An hon. Member: Explain!

Mr. Peters: I do not have to explain that to the million people in this country who are unemployed, or to their dependants. They know exactly what I mean.

● (2222)

Surely there is a solution to the problem, and it is not to do the same thing over and over again. The official opposition is saying it will support the \$1.2 billion in tax concessions being made to business. There are many businessmen in the Conservative party and I would like them to explain how those concessions will change the situation. Most of the companies have more capital now than they need. They have no markets, they are limited in their export abilities, and I do not think they need more capital.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Peters: I see one businessman who disagrees with me. Maybe he has applied for his share of tax concessions. Maybe they will do something for him, but I suggest they will do very little for the unemployed people in this country. Consider Sudbury, for instance. We cannot say that Sudbury is not very well off. That company in that city has received millions and

[Mr. Peters.]

millions of dollars in tax concessions over the years. It is not long ago that members of parliament, even if they had no other income, were paying more in income tax to the government than was Inco.

Inco had a bad year last year, but even after taxes it made \$70 million. They have had no difficulty in getting capital when they saw they did not have enough. They were given it by the Export Credit Corporation. They went into other countries, and we allowed them to do so. Surely it is time we took a look at our industry, particularly our natural resource industry, and decided to do something to husband that industry.

It is true that if Inco continues to mine the way it does today, there will be employment in Sudbury and Sudbury will continue to be a progressive little town for another 30 years, but then the mineral will be gone. We should provide for the people of Sudbury out of the gain that was made from that God-given resource. We should provide for a future for that community. The cost to the people in that community has been very great. It may be the normal course of events, but when you hear Inco saying that they wish to go to Indo-China, Guatemala or somewhere else where they will make more profit for their shareholders, and they do not care what happens to the mineral that is left in the ground in the Sudbury area, and we agree to that, then we deserve what we get. There has always been a way for the government of the day in this free enterprise system to end depressions—by means of war. But surely most members of parliament would agree that is not the way to end the current problems.

The reason I am sure that the way to deal with present economic problems is not by giving corporations another \$1.2 billion is that we have tried this for a number of years, and it is not working. Mr. Speaker, if industries in general did not have the capital to develop to a level where they would meet their full capacity, then it is quite possible it would be necessary to give them capital or allow them to get the capital whereby they could reach the maximum of their producing ability.

● (2227)

Several years ago we agreed that the pensioners of this country—the war pensioners—if they were receiving 100 per cent pension, should receive the average of five of the positions in the civil service, the lowest positions in the civil service. Right now, they need \$30 million to bring them up to where they will get a fair and decent pension. But we do not have \$30 million, says the Minister of Veterans Affairs (Mr. MacDonald). And the Minister of Health (Miss Bégin) says we will have to curtail family allowances because we do not have the money to provide for the escalation in our social services.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Peters: I am glad to hear the backbenchers, who always vote with the government, say this is wrong, that they have the money, they are going to pay the indexing, they are going to provide that, they are going to continue the family allowance benefits. I suppose the government has enough money to pay