

Canadian Economy

I am not asking for the moon. I am asking for fair treatment of an area whose problems no amount of subsidies and grants can solve if a solid base is not laid down.

Give us the Fundy tidal project, and the maritimes will become the powerhouse of the continent, with both Canadian and American—yes, and British, French and Japanese—interests clamouring to invest in us.

Give us the corridor road and, by means of a straight super highway linking Vanceboro in Maine with Sherbrooke in Quebec, shippers, travellers and tourists will be five hours and 150 miles closer to the markets and attractions of central Canada, and vice-versa.

Give us port development, and the great tankers and container ships of the world will come to us in armadas of profit.

In short, give us infrastructures, and let them form the foundation. Then the rest of Canada can forget the subsidies, grants and handouts which they have been forced to provide us, often against their will, for the simple reason that no one has ever had the common sense, foresight and resolution to face facts squarely and to give us the tools with which we can put our own house in order.

My immediate suggestion is that the government direct its attention to the infrastructures I have mentioned, and focus the attention of all government departments on the problems of regional disparity.

[Translation]

Mr. Armand Caouette (Villeneuve): Mr. Speaker, I would first like to congratulate the sponsor of the motion now before us. Of course, this motion opens the door to the discussion of the most serious problems now facing Canada, that is inflation and unemployment. First of all, Mr. Speaker, I would like to refer to a few aspects of the speech made this afternoon by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Chrétien).

First, Mr. Speaker, the minister agreed with us, the opposition, that we now have serious economic problems in our country in spite of all its wealth. But, Mr. Speaker, what have the former minister of finance and the present minister, since his appointment, succeeded in doing to try to solve the problems of unemployment and inflation? This afternoon, the Minister of Finance made fun once again of the people when he said that the government has stated, especially since November 15 of last year, that if we have economic problems throughout Canada and especially in Quebec—and I ask government members to mark my words, so that they will not suggest tomorrow that I am speaking in favour of the Parti Québécois, because this is not true. On the contrary, I am not for the Parti Québécois, and even though I sit in the House of Commons as a federalist, because that is what I am, I am not too blind to see that our country has economic problems.

The minister said that unemployment has increased because women have suddenly decided to join the labour force, which has resulted in more unemployment among young people between 18 and 30. The Minister of Finance agrees with us that to solve this problem, housewives should be paid to stay home and help their family as they would like to do. But

[Mr. Howie.]

because of the economic problems now facing the country, women have to help their husbands support the family.

We would also like to provide pensions at 60 for the people who decide to leave the labour market when they reach the age of 60. This would give an opportunity to young people between 18 and 30, to the same young people who are now waiting to enter the labour market.

As a member from Ottawa said last week about the death penalty, there should be a trial period so that we may see the results brought about by the abolition of the death penalty.

● (2052)

Today I invite the federal government to do the same thing, namely to stop the Trudeau-Lévesque or the Lévesque-Trudeau confrontation because this government has been elected precisely to replace a lousy administration represented by the Bourassa government. We saw then Premier Bourassa being compelled by the right hon. Canadian Prime Minister to eat hot dogs. What did he do: He knelt down and ate those hot dogs. Today, Quebec has a government that stands on its feet and attempts are being made to provoke a show-down with the federal government.

So I invite the present government to stop engaging in confrontation tactics with these people and try to give Canadian citizens a decent standard of living. For many years, we in the Social Credit Party of Canada, have listened to the economic proposals made by the federal government and some of them have turned out to be good but others left much to be desired. We shall keep on making recommendations so that the government may put them into practice. However the time has come also to analyze the political performance of this government, namely this Liberal government which has not succeeded in solving the serious problems plaguing the Canadian economy, namely inflation and a high rate of unemployment. Such is the attitude which the Social Credit Party of Canada has been advocating for several years.

I would like to debate the four interesting points raised in the motion in the name of my colleague, the hon. member for Rimouski (Mr. Allard). Since 1974, the federal government has tried to solve both the problems of inflation and those of unemployment. We have witnessed the various tactics used by this government which actually have always been in the traditional style. First, there were the price and wage control system, the job creation programs, the rate reduction and selective grants in a given sector of the economy. If we scrutinize the budgets of the years 1974 to 1977, we can see the changes in the policies of the government. One of these budgets mentions regional development and another aims at controlling government spending. In all these budgets, traditional measures have been used, changes in tariff and rate structures increases and decreases or even both of these measures combined, job creation programs, adjustment of interest rates and dividends. Every year the federal government has been assuring us that it will solve all the problems of our economy. Despite the variations in the economic strategy of