

papers and make a profit. From what I understand, in Toronto some of them are doing not too bad a job at that right now.

Naturally the gloom and doom produces headlines. The papers understand that. No news is good news. The government of this country has to accept the fact that the media is not able to peddle their wares to the same extent with headlines when things are going well or if the government are making positive accomplishments, as they are doing. However, they can put in blatant headlines problems pointed out to them by the official opposition in the course of their meanderings as well as those they manage to dig up themselves. This they bring to the opposition to have brought forward during question period. The opposition spend their mornings going over the latest headlines to see what they can dig up to use during one hour of the parliamentary process.

We on this side take a more positive approach. We are proud of our position. In my view, it is much more representative of the real mood of Canadians. It is a positive and forward planning attitude toward our country, its potential and, indeed, its problems.

The bill before us at this time makes a landmark in Canadian budgetary and fiscal planning.

Mr. Whiteway: You are right about that.

Mr. Martin: The official opposition acknowledges this, Mr. Speaker. For the first time, the federal Minister of Finance has gone out, at great expense and risk to his own position, to consult with the individual provinces as to the details of some of the important points that he was considering in his budget. This was unheard of before but long sought after by economic experts, specialists across the country and, of course, by the individual provinces.

It was a first try, undertaken by a courageous and sincere Minister of Finance in the face of all kinds of parliamentary background to the contrary. It was a bold step undertaken by a bold man, and, Mr. Speaker, it has basically worked. Unfortunately one province out of ten, or I suppose one province out of nine because the province of Alberta was not directly involved, chose to screw up the works.

Miss Bégin: That is not parliamentary.

Mr. Martin: Is it really any wonder, Mr. Speaker? After all, we are looking at a situation that could arise somewhere else in the country in the future. We are a very diverse and regional type of country. At the present time one province in this country is led by a premier who makes no bones about the fact—and I respect him for his frankness and candour—that his objective while in power is to lead the 28 per cent of Canadians who live within the borders of Quebec out of confederation, out of their country and out of our country, which for 111 years we have jointly enjoyed as Canadians one and all. It is disappointing, but hardly surprising.

My hope is that the current discussions now going on at the deputy minister level will help to resolve this impasse which is all too reminiscent of a similar situation over revenue sharing

Income Tax Act

which occurred in 1953 under another government in Quebec. It happened to be the same province. It was a situation that the official opposition might well note today. It did them and their leader no good in their vain attempts at the time to capitalize on the situation in a political way during the then forthcoming general election which, interestingly enough, came within months of the height of the impasse.

Canadians in all provinces then recognized, and will once again recognize, the craftiness, the devilry, the crass political opportunity of such a move. They will again return to power the national leader who represents the best interests of all sections of this country and continues to maintain a solid position in support of one Canada from coast to coast, made up of diverse regions and provinces, with local culture, linguistic and economic interests, but united in one solid determination to remain together in the larger aim of protecting their national accomplishments and identity, geographic and economic, above all else. This is the kind of objective the leader of this party and the members on this side of the House will pursue, a positive and meaningful objective of which all Canadians can be proud.

We continue to hear in the course of comments coming from members on the other side of the House indications of gloom and doom in the country. We do not hear of anything positive. They assume it is not in their interest. I would question that because, when the chips are down, I wonder how many Canadians would solidly support a bunch of people traversing this country from coast to coast telling them how bad their situation is. It will not happen. It has not happened over the last 15 years and it will not happen the next time either.

I now wish to talk about one or two other areas. The first is the anti-inflation program. Millions of workers recognized the need for such measures and, indeed, supported them. Admittedly, the leadership of organized labour tended to oppose the program, but the millions of workers involved did recognize the need and supported it throughout.

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One result of the program—

An hon. Member: What about inflation?

Mr. Martin: I shall speak about the inflation rate in a few moments.

An hon. Member: What about the unemployed?

Mr. Martin: I do not intend to talk about unemployment. On this side we talk about positive aspects. We intend to increase the employment rate from the level of 92 per cent which presently exists in the country. I might note that the hooting and hollering on the part of the opposition is an indication of nervousness on their side.

As I was saying, one result of the program has been that increases in wage settlements have declined from an average of 17 per cent in 1975 to about 7 per cent currently. The anti-inflation program has done much to help relieve Canada's