

Anti-Inflation Policies

The government can dismiss this as soft talk if it wishes. It can make the claim that it is really being tough. It can make the claim that the current level of unemployment really helps the unemployed. It can make the claim that the unemployed Canadians, and members of the opposition, just are not smart enough to understand that the government is working in the interest of the unemployed. That kind of argument might wash in some board-rooms, but not too many I think; it might even wash in the caucus room of the government party, although I am not even sure of that; but it won't convince anybody else in Canada.

Unemployment is more than being out of work. Unemployment kills the will not only of individuals but of the communities where it is concentrated. That is why it has such a harsh and unfair effect upon the areas which traditionally have been areas of slow growth. If there is to be renewal of these areas, if they are to achieve economic equality or anything like it, one fundamental ingredient must be the desire of the people who live there to move up and the belief that they can. No amount of money from Ottawa can help an area whose spirit of self-help has been strangled or killed. The government is trying to claim that its policies are in fact helping the slow-growth regions. That is not the kind of help they would choose. The D.B.S. figures, as I have mentioned, are quite clear and affect not only the Atlantic provinces but other parts of the country as well.

• (3:10 p.m.)

It is difficult to know what effect, if any, the programs of the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion (Mr. Marchand) are having. He is the most mysterious minister in the House, in terms of what his department is doing. We can, therefore, judge only by the effects the eye can see. On the record, the policies of the Department of Regional Economic Expansion have so far been a failure, and one of the reasons they are a failure is that the government is at the same time pursuing a deliberate policy of creating unemployment. Once again, the government is working at cross-purposes with itself. One minister is charged with building up the slow-growth regions, while the others are busy building up unemployment. You cannot have it both ways. If this government wanted to organize a hockey game, they would have one minister spend millions on new uniforms [Mr. Stanfield.]

and ask another minister to go out and melt the ice. Then, they would boast about what it all cost.

The Minister of Regional Economic Expansion was speaking in Toronto the other night. He did not have a text so we cannot be sure of exactly what he said.

An hon. Member: He doesn't know himself.

Mr. Stanfield: The report in the *Toronto Globe and Mail* reads as follows: "He (the Minister) said that the source of separatist feeling in Quebec was basically economic". The report goes on:

The largest number of nationalists and separatists are in the eastern parts of Montreal and the province, where unemployment is highest, many people are on social security and the average income for each person is about \$1,000 per year.

I assume the message we are to receive from that—and the message the Prime Minister has also been implanting recently—is that current events in Quebec are the result of economic hardship. There is no reason for the government or Canadians to take any comfort from that. There might be some distinction in logic between the Canadian who supports a separatist party out of commitment, and the man who votes separatist out of desperation. But there is very little difference in effect. The Prime Minister and the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion should be the last people to express satisfaction that protest votes are not against federalism per se but against federalism as it is practised by this government.

This country has enough natural divisions already. More than most federations, it needs a central government which is respected as an ally by every part of Canada, and particularly by the disadvantaged who have the strongest natural cause to question federalism. This government instead has gone out of its way to infuriate or alienate the people on the economic margins of the country. It has virtually ignored the crisis facing farmers in the west. It turns its back on the aged and on those Canadians who live below the poverty line. It creates economic conditions which mean that young Canadians cannot get work when they come out of school. It callously and deliberately creates new unemployment in the name of fighting inflation.

I do not intend to dwell on the issue which the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion raised. But surely it is clear to us all—and certainly it is proper for the Parliament of Canada to discuss—the fact that unemploy-