

Employment Programs

our duty in Ottawa to say that the federal government is not against the province of Quebec, as we were told for 25 or 30 years.

I call the attention of the hon. member for York South—and I know that the hon. member for Charlevoix (Mr. Asselin) has brought in a correction in this connection—to the heading of an article in *Le Devoir*. The hon. member for Charlevoix tries again to raise a problem of which the population is extremely tired. This heading is as follows:

Martial Asselin: Without a special status for Quebec, Canada is finished.

We have been reading such titles in newspapers for ten years. We have been saying over and over again for ten years that the Quebec people do not want the resumption of fruitless constitutional discussions but rather economic action.

In this regard, the federal government is doing presently what it ought to do. Indeed, it passed an act on economic development. This legislation is not perfect but since January 1, 1969, the federal government has contributed to the development or the establishment of 267 new industries in the province of Quebec. About \$39 million have been paid to Quebec as incentives to economic and industrial expansion. In Ontario, 45,000 new jobs were created—as compared to 3,000 in Quebec—with only \$10 million in aid to economic expansion.

If something is wrong in Quebec, it is attributable to the lack of investors, I think. As a matter of fact, they run away from political complications that some provincial politicians have kept up while pursuing their own purposes. Among the efficient measures the government has implemented, are the system of equalization payments and the aid to economic expansion which, according to some other provinces, constitute preferential treatment to words the province of Quebec.

Just recently, steps have been taken to solve problems in the textile industry, which creates many jobs in Quebec, particularly in the Montreal region and in part of my riding.

However, measures implemented or to be implemented by the hon. Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Pepin) will ensure better control of imports and a rational increase in the number of jobs in the industry.

Those are absolutely positive measures likely to bring about a more promising future for workers of Quebec. I do not intend to blame the hon. member for York-South for trying to establish a relationship of some sort between FLQ activities and the unemployment situation which prevails at present. Indeed, most FLQ members are connected with the Parti Québécois. They specifically advocate the destruction of Canada. I would not think that these same people would tackle the federal government.

While I agree with the hon. member for York South concerning the unfortunate effects of unemployment, I believe he could give a hand to his fellow members and especially those from Quebec and try to impress on the population that the federal government has done more than it could possibly do.

[Mr. Laflamme.]

It has been said that federal legislation sometimes favour Quebec sometimes the rest of Canada. Fifteen times more jobs have been created in one province than in another. This depends on the lack of capital and inaction on the part of the government at the provincial level.

It is essential during the following months that unemployment be reduced in our province, as well as in the other provinces where the rate of unemployment is entirely unacceptable. The support of the whole Canadian population is needed, as well as a common front, to preserve unity in the country by supporting the measures deemed essential by the government to ensure security of employment.

• (4:50 p.m.)

[English]

Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, I, of course, agree with my leader who began by saying that the matter of unemployment is not simply a regional problem. Of course it is not. Nevertheless, in my brief intervention of 15 minutes I shall try to call again for attention to the economic ills of the Atlantic area. To try in 15 minutes to discuss the neglect of a century is a challenge, sir. I wish it were not necessary for us here constantly to bring to the attention of this Parliament the problems of our regions. I would much prefer to be able to point to levels, statistics and satisfactions in the economic life of Atlantic Canada which would equal many of the non-economic aspects which are so much to be cherished in our part of Canada. Yet I do not apologize for declaring and reiterating the needs and inequities of the provinces by the sea. Confederation was a merging and sharing of many things. Certainly, it is a sharing of disadvantages, especially those which the act of confederation itself imposed or made more burdensome.

This country is not truly prosperous if any of its regions, or governments, or its people are seriously disadvantaged as a result of the acts of omission or commission of the national government. The resolution refers to the serious problems in Quebec. We all feel concern about such matters. Surely, all decent people want to help this province in its present travail. In many ways Quebec and Atlantic Canada have similar weaknesses, problems and disadvantages. While there have been dramatic, and sometimes I feel dangerous, reactions in Quebec that have not been in those the provinces by the sea, let us not think that the economic problems that concern us and the disadvantages that exist are less critical, less serious or less blighting than those which for too long have affected and inhibited the province of Quebec. In fact the difference, in a general way, may be that ours, sadly, have been of much longer duration. But because we have become accustomed to the role of being the Cinderella of confederation does not mean that we have grown enamoured of that role. In fact, we have long since grown weary of finding ourselves at the bottom of the favourable economic statistics and heading those which are unfavourable. The fourth report of the Economic Council of Canada set out vividly the continuing and deplorable situation.