

● (5:40 p.m.)

In view of the government's promises and propaganda, its failure to deal with the problems is a sad betrayal of the confidence of the people. We have a government which will not look after the plain, elementary housekeeping, and therefore we have an economy gathering dust like a machine somebody forgot to oil, and unemployment is growing steadily every month.

The way in which the government has mismanaged the wheat situation is almost incredible. Members of the government sat on their hands all summer while a strike dragged on. They made no move to allocate box cars with the result that millions of dollars were taken out of western farmers' pockets by the tie up in Vancouver. When the hon. member for Mackenzie (Mr. Korchinski) placed the matter before the Canadian people, the government woke up and box cars moved. But why were they not moving before?

Our trade department has allowed a complete breakdown in the movement of grain. Demurrage charges alone on the vessels sitting in Vancouver harbour are costing the people of this nation almost \$1 million every 18 days.

Unless there is a complete change in the government's attitude towards agriculture we will never solve our agricultural problems. Canadian agriculture is one of the leading consumers of manufactured goods. If the state of agriculture is allowed to depreciate, if it is allowed to continue on its present path, if its strength is sapped by further taxes, then I submit we will not have an increase in jobs in this country. Unemployment is far more closely related to the state of agriculture than most people, including a great many enlightened people, would suppose.

In the west we have no market for our wheat. The prospects are for lower beef prices in the spring, increased taxes, higher machinery prices and narrower profit margins. In order to stay in business farmers and ranchers are working 16 to 18 hours a day, resulting in a loss of jobs for other people. Thousands of extra people could be employed on the farms if profit margins were sufficiently high to allow farmers to stay in business and still work normal hours.

As a result of the inaction last summer, damp grain has become a major problem. It will have to be fed to cattle this winter, or at least a large portion of it, and I think we can look for a drop in beef prices in the spring—possibly, in the prices of all meat products.

#### *Alleged Failure to Reduce Unemployment*

That is another thing for which the western farmers, and the economy in general, can thank the government.

Where is our national policy? Stimulation of the oil industry would have created employment and expansion. Instead of policy we have a vacuum of indecision. Instead of western oil being delivered to eastern Canada, we have Venezuelan oil coming in there. Is it any wonder we have regional disparity and growing unemployment when we have artificial barriers maintained between parts of Canada as a result of government lethargy?

Instead of dealing with real problems we spend our time dwelling on the miscues of society and the new code of personal conduct handed to us by the new Solon, the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), who goes his merry way regardless of the problems affecting Canadians.

The leader of this party has shown in his statement that unemployment is a serious and growing evil, and at the present rate will soon be uncontrollable. Yet the government has produced no remedy; it has offered no encouragement; it has shown no awareness. How long can a government go on living in a cocoon of indifference to national problems?

One of the most serious problems in the nation today is housing. It has been treated with disdain and disregard, the object of a publicity seeking barnstorming tour by the responsible minister—at least we hope he is a responsible minister. This problem is now being dealt with in a hastily thrown together report which is simply a cry of defeat on the part of the federal government. Was it really necessary to spend a million dollars to produce a report which comes out not with a bang but with a whimper, and which does nothing to deal with the basic problems, the high cost of housing and the unavailability of low interest mortgage money? This report is simply a piece of window dressing. It is an admission by the government that the problem it faces is beyond its resources.

What is needed is an effort on a mass scale to produce reasonably priced, utilitarian housing blocks at a unit cost that Canadians can afford to meet, possibly by the entry of the government housing corporation into the housing field. There is no real reason why, with drastically new construction methods, advances in building components, a revamping of our building codes and union regulations, better and cheaper housing cannot be provided, with resultant increases in jobs.