

Government Administrative Policies

the government has the responsibility to consider mandatory selective restraints but with two provisos: those restraints must be on all forms of income, not just wage and salary earners, and the government must examine some of the prices which have been artificially inflated against the possibility that controls would be imposed. Any attempt to impose restraints on income should be flexible with respect to those on very low incomes and cost of living increases should be built into public and private pension plans so that those on fixed incomes would continue to get the return to which they are entitled from their retirement plans.

I suggest these things to the government, Mr. Speaker: the calling of a conference of business and labour, an expansionist program to relieve unemployment and, if the government is frightened of inflation or finds that it is getting out of hand, the government should consider the feasibility of a comprehensive selective system of restraints on all forms of income.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I submit that the Canadian people have always responded to dynamic leadership that knows where it is going, whether in wartime or peacetime. The Canadian people are a patriotic people, and I use the term "patriotic" in the proper sense of the word. The Canadian people would respond to these things if the government said, "We are going to stimulate the economy; we are going to put every able-bodied person to work but we need your co-operation to see that inflation does not become rampant". They could get that kind of co-operation, but to get it the government itself must give courageous and effective leadership. To date, they have not given it and for that reason I think they no longer deserve the confidence of this House.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased, without being happy about it, however, to participate in the debate on this most important motion that deals with matters in which we encounter problems daily.

The federal Department of Agriculture was set up to meet a need and play several roles which interest not only the farmers themselves but also the consumers, for, on page 15 of the estimates for 1970-71, the objectives of the Department of Agriculture are given as follows:

To improve the performance of Canadian agriculture as a strong, competitive, primary industry.

I feel that, strictly in the field of production, the federal Department of Agriculture, in co-operation with the provincial departments of agriculture and the farmers themselves, really achieved that objective years ago, but this creates marketing problems not only for the farmers themselves, but also for the government which cannot sell that production.

And so, the federal Department of Agriculture, has really achieved one objective but if it wants to continue to be efficient and play an even greater role, it must, with the help of other departments, see to it that that production reaches the consumer in order to meet human needs.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we see that, unfortunately, that last objective has not been achieved. In fact, warehouses are packed with goods and the federal government is requesting the farmers to slow down this production which is breeding trouble for the administration. However, we would be far from having surpluses were this production to reach the consumers, so as to meet their needs not only in Canada but in the United States and in the other countries of the world.

We may share an idea, which is not a discovery made by the hon. member for Bellechasse, but one we may trace down to the Fifth report of the Economic Council of Canada which was tabled in the House in September 1968, and which has a chapter on the problem of poverty. While saying the word "poverty" I know that some people think that there should not be too much talk about that, or better even, that the subject should be avoided.

If I now talk about it, it is not just for the sake of doing so. The word is not a pleasant one, specially for those who are the victims.

The Economic Council of Canada has made some suggestions inviting the governments to take the necessary steps in order to ensure economic relief in the country as a whole so that the greatest possible number of people may benefit from consuming Canadian products, thus enjoying a minimum of security.

On page 17 of the summary of this report, one reads the following:

Poverty in Canada is real. Its numbers are not in the thousands, but the millions. There is more of it than our society can tolerate more than our economy can afford, and far more than existing measures and effort can cope with. Its persistence, at a time when the bulk of Canadians enjoy one of the highest standards of living in the world, is a disgrace.