

Government Administrative Policies

Mr. Speaker: Obviously, there is some difficulty. I suggest we should at this time allow the Leader of the Opposition to put his motion to the House.

Mr. Bell: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order with respect to today's debate. In view of the importance of today's debate and the invitation the Prime Minister gave to us today to bring up matters with respect to the economy, will the Prime Minister assure the House that the Minister of Finance, and other responsible ministers, will be in their places this afternoon to hear our speeches on this important day near the end of the present session?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance told me himself that if the opposition wishes to raise any particular matter which concerns him he will gladly engage in debate on the subject.

Mr. Bell: Mr. Speaker, may I say that the first two major speeches we shall be making concern the Minister of Finance. Could the Prime Minister take my remarks as notice?

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I will pass on this information to the minister. I know his intention is to be in the House, if called for. He may not be able to hear every part of every speech which is made, but I am sure that the essence of the message that the opposition wants to convey to him will be conveyed to him—whatever essence there is.

Mr. Speaker: Orders of the day.

● (3:30 p.m.)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY S.O. 58—DISAPPROVAL OF CERTAIN ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES OF GOVERNMENT

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition) moved:

That this House express its disapproval of the administrative policies of the government by opposing items in the Main Estimates for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 1971; and in particular Vote 1 of the Department of Agriculture, Vote 10, Communications and Post Office, Vote 5 of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Vote 1 of the Privy Council and Votes 1 and 5 of the Treasury Board.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I hope the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) has sent a message directly to the Minister of Finance (Mr.

Benson), because I know he would not wish to miss anything I say about the question of unemployment and related matters. The Prime Minister quipped a moment ago that the Minister of Finance would be happy to hear the essence of our message, if there is any essence. I hasten to assure him that, without doubt, there is a great deal of essence to the problem, which is important for this country and exceptionally serious for our people who have been caught in misfortunes created for them by the Government of Canada. The government does not appear to take these problems at all seriously.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Stanfield: The most recent Dominion Bureau of Statistics figures on unemployment are most alarming.

Mr. Bell: The Prime Minister is leaving.

Mr. Stanfield: They show an unemployment rate of 6.2 per cent for May 23, as seasonally adjusted. Without seasonal adjustment, the rate for the month is 6.1 per cent, compared with 4.7 per cent for one year earlier. Seasonally adjusted, the rate for May is 6.2 per cent. The rate of unemployment is 6.2 per cent, representing 513,000 persons, as against 4.8 per cent in 1969. The seasonally adjusted rate of 6.2 per cent is the highest seasonally adjusted rate of unemployment this country has experienced since 1962.

Mr. Bell: Shame.

Mr. Stanfield: Employment between May 1969 and May 1970 increased by about 90,000 persons in the course of that year. Eighty-five thousand out of the 90,000 new jobs were created in the province of Ontario. In other words, in the rest of Canada the increased employment over-all was a mere 5,000 persons. The amount of employment on the Prairies was stationary as between 1969 and 1970. It was somewhat less in Quebec in May of this year than it was one year ago. It is up by some 5,000 in the Atlantic provinces, and in British Columbia it is up somewhat as well, although we must recognize in fairness that there have been some strikes in British Columbia which will affect the picture in that province.

It is important for us to look at the figures as a whole. It is significant, too, sir, that the amount of actual employment is down significantly in a number of important areas, in particular the area of manufacturing. There were 18,000 fewer persons employed in the