

Unemployment Insurance Act

introduce another budget, or whether he will even be Minister of Finance in a few months. The sad fact is that when the President of the Treasury Board announced that we would have a balanced budget next year no one seemed to believe him. His statement had absolutely no effect on the stock market or the value of the Canadian dollar, both of which continued to go down.

We now have to provide for medicare, Mr. Speaker, which will add to the burden of the ordinary citizen, will increase income taxes once again, will diminish purchasing power and will probably set off another round of price increases. On top of this the government plans to bring in unemployment insurance changes, scrapping the insurance principle and turning unemployment insurance into yet another uncontrolled welfare scheme. The government also wants to increase deductions from pay cheques of workers, along with contributions made by industry. All of these things, I claim, tend to have an inflationary effect, being passed on in the form of price increases, which in turn give rise to further wage demands.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that it is time for the government to call a halt. The economy is being crippled, prosperity is being drained off and the incomes of Canadians are being confiscated by these massive welfare schemes. If I read my mail correctly, Mr. Speaker, Canadians cannot and do not want to pay any more. I really do not know what we have to do to bring this fact more forcefully to the attention of the government. It is taking income from the pockets of Canadians simply in order to buy for itself a little extra time in office. Canadians know that the critical point has been reached; they can feel a distinct loss of confidence in the economy. Canadian exports are meeting resistance abroad and imports are picking up. The government has been warned about this situation over and over again. Surely the time has come to return to reality and to drop these undermining measures, which can only hurt the economy without benefiting those for whom they are intended. The government should put a rein on spending and follow policies that benefit Canada's economy.

While the government is tossing the taxpayers' money right and left, the essential needs of the economy and of society are not being looked after. What about housing? No money is available for housing, except at exorbitant interest rates.

[Mr. Crouse.]

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am sure the hon. member will realize that I have to remind him that we are dealing with amendments to the Unemployment Insurance Act. Perhaps he will attempt to limit his remarks to the bill now before the house.

Mr. Crouse: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thought I was doing that when I made direct reference to the minister's statement that the reason for these changes was brought about by economic inflation. In my view—and I stand corrected—my thoughts are related to the expansionist programs that have contributed in no small measure to the inflation referred to by the minister. However, my remarks are practically finished, and if you will bear with me for a minute I shall have concluded my speech.

I ask the government, Mr. Speaker, what about development? No action is being taken to develop this nation. What about bringing our resources to market, starting new industries and providing new sources of income for Canadians? Nothing is being done to maintain the high level of economic expansion which is vitally necessary. In my view this government should be concerned with policies to provide employment instead of policies to look after unemployment. This government, intoxicated with welfare schemes, is letting the economy of the nation run down, like a watch that somebody forgot to wind. I wish to warn them, Mr. Speaker, that unless they return to reality they will find that time has run out on them as well.

Mr. M. W. Martin (Timmins): Mr. Speaker, one disadvantage of speaking at this stage of the debate is that it is very difficult to find a field not already covered in one form or another by other hon. members.

Mr. Reid: Why not try talking about the bill?

Mr. Martin (Timmins): As the minister pointed out when he introduced the bill this morning, these are the first amendments to the act since 1959. If a piece of legislation as important to the people of Canada from coast to coast as this is amended only once every nine or ten years, more thought should go into those amendments when the time does arrive to put them in legislative form.

For example, I wonder why some attempts have not been made to correct some of the evils that have developed since the passage of the bill in 1959. I think one of the most evident evils that has become apparent is that