

Alleged Non-Support of Employment Programs

steadfastly refuses to adopt measures to stimulate the economy so that new jobs can be created. Jobs do not occur by chance or by whim; they have to be created by industries and by business. But industries and businesses can only survive and grow in a healthy economy. There is a strange contradiction between the statements of the government and the facts.

I doubt that there is a record in the long history of Canada of a Prime Minister telling his people that if they do not like the way he is running the country, they can lump it. But our present Prime Minister has said just that. Is there any wonder, then, that he can find millions of dollars per year for aid programs for Ceylon, Indonesia, Pakistan, India, and countless millions for other countries, but cannot or will not attempt to find solutions to fundamental social and economic problems in his own country?

A couple of weeks ago it was brought to the attention of the House of Commons that a secret memo had been circulated in public service offices in Ottawa calling upon department heads to create jobs for 250 French Canadian college graduates who could not find work. The jobs were to be at senior levels, but there would not be the screening and testing procedures for these positions that are part of the laws governing the appointment and promotion of federal employees. At the bottom of the memo there was a notation that this order would not be made public.

When faced with this, the government's ministers at first denied that such a memo existed. When a copy was produced, the Prime Minister then admitted there was a document but said the program was actually only a feasibility study. When pressed further, he admitted that the government was planning to bring in these French Canadians in such a manner and said he was entitled to do so in the interest of creating better balance between English and French Canadians in the federal service.

Such a practice violates the principles of fair employment in that it discriminates in favour of a language or ethnic group. It is in violation of the government's own Public Service Employment Act, and it is in contravention of the merit system in the public service that is designed to ensure that appointments and promotions are made throughout the service on the basis of merit. It is a sad commentary on the conduct of the present government that 250 people from a specific language group are brought into choice federal jobs through the back door, when there are hundreds of thousands of unemployed Canadians of other ethnic and language groups looking to their government for leadership and employment.

It is being said that the government is doing so much damage to our traditional institutions and to our system of government that there can never be any recovery from its effects, especially since this government has about two more years to rule. I do not believe that. The Canadian people can and will return our government to the people, and they will impartially restore our traditional institutions to their former greatness. Whatever the present government does to concentrate power in the

few at the top can and will be undone. It has been done before—in the voting booths.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I see an hon. member rising, but I must point out that the time of the hon. member who has just resumed his seat has expired and he would not be able to answer a question unless there was unanimous consent. Is it agreed that the hon. member's time be extended to answer a question?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: There is no agreement.

Mr. Mark Rose (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, as a member of the party sitting in this section of the House I welcome a debate on social welfare as proposed by the official opposition. As the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson) told us during the budget debate, 23 per cent of the nation's unemployed live in British Columbia, and this number is therefore bound to be reflected in the social welfare figures in my province. We of the NDP are often labelled the welfare party. This I categorically deny. Our whole purpose and philosophy is oriented to do everything we possibly can to remove people from social welfare rolls and, if possible, place them back into productive society.

• (8:40 p.m.)

Our programs and policies have always been oriented in this way, but because we are concerned with the casualties of the system, this current system, perhaps we have not paid enough attention to the rehabilitative role of social welfare and have concentrated too much on the maintenance role. In any event, as President Johnson once said rather crudely, we want to turn people into taxpayers, not tax eaters.

Much has been said about the government's anti-inflation policy and its relationship to the mounting unemployment roles. Because of mounting unemployment the municipalities I represent are faced with a tremendous increase in terms of their own budgets a direct result of increasing unemployment. I should like to quote a few figures which I think will indicate the magnitude of the problem faced by some of them. Let me refer to the welfare costs of the municipality of Surrey for the years 1968, 1969 and 1970. The total municipal expenditure in 1968 was \$866,000. In 1969 it was \$1,040,000, and in 1970 it was approximately \$1,500,000.

Let me give the House the figures in respect of one or two other municipalities which I represent. In the rural municipality of Langley the cost in 1969 was \$59,000. In 1970 the cost was \$67,000, and in 1971 the estimated cost is \$92,000. The population involved in social welfare in these municipalities during the same years increased from 8.06 per cent to 8.09 per cent, and this year to an incredible 10.12 per cent. In the suburban municipality of Port Moody, which is highly industrialized, the cost to the municipality in 1969 was \$17,500, in 1970 it was \$19,000, and in 1971 it is estimated to be \$45,000.

[Mr. Alkenbrack.]