

Anti-Inflation Policies

American election campaign—where you can participate in everything but gainful employment.

Unfortunately for the working man, the statistics for Newfoundland do not improve when you leave that province. Indeed, the labour force of New Brunswick discovered that 11.8 per cent of its members cannot find employment. In Prince Edward Island, 9.7 per cent of the labour force find themselves in the same position. Nova Scotia holds the lowest figure standing at 7.7 per cent. While unemployment in this country is a federal responsibility, I feel that the aggressive activities of the government of Nova Scotia have had something to do with the fact that their unemployment rate is the lowest of all the Atlantic provinces.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Muir (Cape Breton-The Sydneys): In the Atlantic region, 10.8 per cent of the labour force is unemployed. The President of the Treasury Board seems to be muttering and mumbling. If he has anything to say that is encouraging for the unemployed of this country, I will be glad to let him have the floor after I finish my speech. He can then state all the wonderful things he is offering to the unemployed of this country. Let's hope this great union lover comes out with a good story, an encompassing exposé, stating what he and the government intend to do for the unemployed. I know he has a soft spot in that flintstone heart of his for the labour movement.

• (4:40 p.m.)

It was once a cornerstone of Liberal manpower policy to assert that an unemployment rate of 5 per cent indicated the nation was feeling the severe effects of a recession. Today, the figure stands at 6.7 yet the government continues to tolerate and, indeed, to bring about rising unemployment as part of its policy to check inflation. It intends to continue this policy even if it means that every man in the country is out of work. It is placing the burden of the fight against inflation on the backs of the half million men and women who are unemployed. And, in my opinion, the figure of 542,000 which has been suggested is, in reality, closer to 600,000, because I do not believe we are getting a true picture of the actual number of the unemployed; so many have become disgusted after going so often to manpower offices and hearing there are no jobs available. The people who

[Mr. Muir (Cape Breton-The Sydneys).]

staff the manpower offices cannot help the situation. They are willing to do their best, but there is no employment to offer.

The determination of the Trudeau administration to conquer inflation regardless of the unemployment statistics is exemplified by the stubbornness displayed by the Prime Minister daily in this House. He takes advice from no one but himself and the working man of this country has discovered that his adviser is a damn poor mentor.

Advice has been freely given by my leader as to the way in which inflation can be conquered without placing the burden on the shoulders of the unemployed. Advice has been given by all the candidates for premier, or, should I say, prime minister, in the province of Quebec, including Robert Bourassa, the Liberal leader. And this advice is significantly different from the policy presently being followed by this government. Advice has been offered by economists who have not reverted to the economic philosophy of the 1930's as to how both inflation and unemployment can be checked. But the government hears no one, sees no one and does nothing but create greater unemployment with each passing day.

Have we now arrived at the point at which the economy is out of control and out of the hands of the government manipulators? Are we heading into the worst recession this country has faced since the dirty thirties? These are questions which must be answered in the very near future by both the Prime Minister and his Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson), to say nothing of the Minister of Labour (Mr. Mackasey) and the Minister of Manpower (Mr. MacEachen) who, with the President of Treasury Board are supposed to be the great friends of the working man. All we have received from the Minister of Labour and the Minister of Manpower are flowery words that put neither money in the pockets of the working man, nor bread in his lunch pail. Flower power has failed, but maybe if we listen to the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Munro) we will go to pot.

The only place in Canada where unemployment is not a problem is in the Prime Minister's office. Each day we pick up the paper and see the Prime Minister has added another manipulator to his staff, until we realise he has an army of personal procrastinators at an annual cost in excess of \$800,000. I am sure that if he continues to get his way, this will be the only army Canada will have.