

*The Address—Mr. Mackasey*

Welfare (Mr. Lalonde), and I assure you he is a persuasive gentleman, include some reference to the daycare centres which are so badly needed in this country.

I am glad there are to be some changes in industrial relations that pertain to civil servants, because I think that some of the adverse reaction our party felt in this general area was due to the fact that we have not in the last few years been the best employers in Canada, as the government should be. I am hopeful that new legislation in that particular area will be more consistent with the type of legislation one sees in respect of private industry.

Let me say very briefly in passing that we should not react quite so readily to the reactionary forces in this country. It is interesting to note that we have cut back on immigration from about 260,000 people to less than 125,000 people in the last couple of years, in spite of the fact that we had a unique method of permitting visitors to become landed immigrants in this country under certain conditions. I made the decision to cut this particular feature, not because I was against that concept, but because I realized that the appeal system was being very badly abused and could not be rectified without a change in the Immigration Appeal Board legislation. I am pleased that the new minister, a very excellent man, has indicated in the throne speech that he will change this piece of legislation. I hope when he does so he will enlarge the over-worked and underpaid board and thereby rectify these issues as well.

I was hoping that the throne speech might finally give recognition to the moral obligation the House of Commons has to the retired pensioners of our major railways. It seems to me that both the CPR and the CNR could well afford to increase their pension plans to at least equal what any other decent employer in this country feels is adequate for those people who have given the better part of their lives to the service of their employers.

I was struck by the speech of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) today. It was a very good speech. I want to make it very clear that in no way can he be held responsible for the present level of unemployment. This is something he has inherited, but he has a responsibility to reduce it. I stand as guilty or as innocent as the rest of the Cabinet under the rules of Cabinet solidarity for the present level of unemployment. That minister spoke of the difficulty of forecasting. The only suggestion I can make is that there are some forecasters in his department he would be better off without. I can assure the hon. gentleman that if they had been in the Department of Labour they would have departed 15 minutes after I took over that department.

Back in 1970 when I was Minister of Labour I said the following, and I stand by it. This statement has a strange similarity to that of the Minister of Finance. Let me quote from page 1860 of the Commons Debates of December 8, 1970:

I might sound rather like a heretic if I were to suggest that a country as rich as Canada should never again be faced with this degree of unemployment. People today are interested in the quality of life rather than quantity of life. A better educated work force and, paradoxically, a better educated non-working force will no longer tolerate the booms and busts of our economy. They have been synonymous with most of the economies of what is loosely known as the western world.

[Mr. Mackasey.]

• (1700)

The targets of this and all future governments should at all times be full employment. I think I am really echoing the sentiments of the cabinet in general, and certainly those of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), in saying that, everything being equal, this government is dedicated to the concept of full employment.

**An hon. Member:** What happened?

**Mr. Mackasey:** Further, for the benefit of the gentleman who just shouted "what happened", I shall quote something I said in reference to the former leader of the socialist party:

Big business does generate jobs and the opposition must realize that if we are to have the social policies this country needs, and if we are to create the jobs we need for perhaps the fastest growing force in the world, we will have to encourage Canadian investors, multinational and international corporations to invest in this country, preferably along guidelines that will protect the Canadian economy and prevent further erosion of Canadianism. Nevertheless, I think the suggestion of the hon. gentleman who leads the New Democratic Party that we should be prepared to introduce selective controls might very well be the answer to the next round of inflation. The point I am getting at is that this country can no longer afford the type of unemployment that faces us this winter.

I might suggest that I was talking about the winter of 1970.

**An hon. Member:** Things have not improved a bit.

**Mr. Mackasey:** I think things are worse now which is nothing to boast about. I will agree with you. Having suggested that perhaps some improvement is needed in the method of forecasting, I have taken the trouble to list some of the excuses that these Mandarins have been using in recent months to excuse their forecasting inability. The first was the greater number of women in the work force. I realize that this began in 1949. Then, they switched to the growth in the work force as pointed out by the Economic Council some years ago. Then they moved to what is called the participation rate. That lost favour when it became obvious that there could be an increase in the participation rate and a decrease in unemployment, if you look up the figures say of 1956. Then, they coined the phrase, "the welfare bums"—not corporate welfare bums, just people. Then, when that got tiresome they swung to, "work ethic". Now, the Mandarins in Ottawa have discovered a new word, "disincentive". The disincentive has to be the result of unemployment insurance, particularly the increased level of benefits.

As long as you can keep the problem of unemployment insurance, and the alleged abuse of unemployment insurance in the headlines of newspapers which all too frequently are happy to co-operate in this regard rather than perhaps answer the arguments of the New Democratic Party, then you take the spotlight off the unemployment figures of this particular country. We have heard a lot about abuses. In recent months we have heard a lot about unemployment insurance. I have waited a long time to speak on this subject. I will have another opportunity in a couple of weeks to speak about unemployment insurance when the amendments proposed in the throne speech come forward. I am not apologizing for the so-called generosity of a plan which pays \$66 average to the workers of this country for a period of 16 or 17 weeks of the year as opposed to what they would have received three