

Anti-Inflation Policies

work the year round, but rather for one, two, three or four months. Some sort of rotation takes place during the year. This means that approximately 1.25 million people are unemployed during a certain period of the year.

Everyone knows that forest workers, miners, construction and other workers must have a yearly income, otherwise they cannot make ends meet.

If a man goes back to work after having been unemployed during a certain period of the year, his financial problems are not over. When people are jobless bills pile up. Necessary clothing cannot be bought. People must therefore try to increase their earnings when they go back to work. In 1968 1,389,366 people were affected by unemployment.

Furthermore, we know that most of the time 40 to 45 per cent of the unemployed are to be found in Quebec, which is not a very enviable record. It is therefore not surprising to see signs of dissatisfaction among some people who get panicky when they think of the probable result of tomorrow's election in that province.

Some Progressive Conservative members have made representations to the government so that Quebec does not separate from the rest of Canada. I do not think that the citizens of Quebec have reached that stage but, nevertheless, it is true that discontent is general in Quebec because people are fed up with having to put up with a false, obsolete and outdated system.

The night the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson) tabled the budget, newsmen interviewed the Prime Minister about unemployment and the fight against inflation. He answered then that the fight he had undertaken against inflation had not yet given any result and that he was carrying it on in this area. In short, we do not know where we are going but we are going anyway.

With a view to checking the steady increase in the cost of living, we are trying to create more and more unemployment, without showing the least concern for the Canadian workers and taxpayers. The cost of living must definitely be brought down. However, people do not realize that the methods resorted to could well lead to an economic recession, which would be just the opposite of the results that are being sought.

What we ask of the government is not an increase of the unemployment level, but the creation of more jobs while it is still time.

[Mr. Laprise.]

There are many things that can and must be done but we do not want the battle against inflation to be fought at the expense of the workers.

Often enough I hear people say that we should promote full employment in every field. In the province of Quebec, the chief of one party recently announced that if his party gets into power he will see that 100,000 new jobs are created.

We are wondering how he will create these 100,000 new jobs.

What does he prefer? Certainly, if one looks at the various economic sectors, we find there is no problem in the production area. As a matter of fact, we are not short of consumer goods. This year, payments of about \$100 million will be made to the western wheat producers to get them to reduce their production. Thus, we are granting subsidies and it is not because we are short of wheat.

However, dairy producers are penalized because they produce too much. They have to pay a fine of \$1.50 if they produce milk in excess of the quota allowed to them by the government. It is not because we are short of milk, since Canadians produce more than they can consume. I am not saying they consume all the dairy products they should. Far from it. But the unemployed cannot afford to buy butter. They must be satisfied with margarine, and they cannot provide their families with all the fluid milk they would need. Sometimes, they have to make do with a pint of milk, whereas they should drink a gallon a day.

I do not say that there is overproduction of dairy products, but rather underconsumption in that field in particular—although there is an across-the-board underconsumption—because thousands of unemployed people cannot buy everything they need. What will happen to the 100,000 new jobs? What kind of products which are required at present could we produce when there is already enough production?

In his book "The American Challenge" Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber reports that the forecasts are such that in the U.S. and therefore, in Canada, its vassal, the average income will reach \$7,500 in just 30 years and the work week will be made up of four 7-hour days, or 28 working hours. The year would be divided into 39 work weeks and 13 holiday weeks, which would give the workers 218 free days for 147 work days if one takes into account week-ends and holidays.