

belong to we are indeed concerned over the extremely serious difficulties we have to cope with but which do not unduly affect us as parliamentarians. We do enjoy certain advantages and we can live decently even if it is not easy. But we are specially worried because inflation and high interest rates prevent some people from enjoying the minimum required, feeding and housing themselves as they should, and because they deprive too many Canadians of the necessities of life.

Mr. Speaker, after listening to these sometimes rather violent exchanges of opinions I came to the conclusion that we will not be able to find worth-while solutions if we continue to toe the party line which, however justifiable it may be on occasion, is no longer acceptable when we have to face problems experienced by a number of our fellow citizens who do not belong to any of the parties in the House.

Mr. Speaker, my greatest annoyance stems from the accusing and provocative tone used by some hon. members against, for example, the leaders. Whether from one party or another, in my opinion they are leaders who should command respect, esteem and consideration from all members because of their extremely arduous task, particularly these days. In a way, Mr. Speaker, I find it inconceivable that attacks are made against the Right Hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), among others, and that such accusations are delivered in personal terms. It is normal that people make judgments on the actions of the head of a country. It is normal that his policies be criticized. But what I find altogether absurd and unacceptable is an attack against a man who, to the best of his knowledge and judgment, attempts to discharge his heavy responsibilities. Most fortunately, Mr. Speaker, not all members across the floor have made such comments. But ever since I entered politics, and that was 12-odd years ago, as a member of a party my duty and foremost responsibility has been to refrain from ever personally accusing a party leader or even a colleague.

● (1330)

Mr. Speaker, the fact remains that on both sides of the House we are trying to find early and worthy solutions to our problem of inflation and high interest rates. But I suggest, Mr. Speaker, and it may come as a surprise to many, that although inflation is a serious problem and although it has reached alarming levels I still consider that our number one problem in Canada, and particularly in my region, is not necessarily inflation but rather unemployment. To my mind it is even more tragic to see that thousands of people who live in my region are looking for jobs, that they make themselves available and offer their skills but they cannot find the kind of work which will enable them to play a positive role in our society.

Of course it is unpleasant and even difficult to pay too much for certain foodstuffs or certain services. But in the final analysis, Mr. Speaker, is it not the end product of our own behaviour, is it not because at one time we were all a little bit

### *Economic Conditions*

responsible for failing to realize the significance of appreciating our wealth and to avoid wasting it?

If the field of energy is causing us such headaches today, is it not because we have used our abundant wealth without thinking that the day might come when shortages would occur? To a certain extent, Mr. Speaker, should we not shoulder the blame for our own problems created by energy and inflation? Have we not been overly slavish to the luxury and comfort which we can no longer do without and for which we are not prepared to pay the price? Mr. Speaker, I believe it is absolutely necessary that we examine our own conscience regardless of the party we belong to. It has been said over and over again that inflation is not peculiar to Canada. Several countries feel the pinch a lot more tragically but, because those problems are worldwide, we should not avoid facing them here at home.

It would be sheer irresponsibility not to see inflation as a major problem. That being so, I still feel that no government can possibly deal with the hardships of inflation if the people themselves, if each citizen aware of his responsibilities does not make the necessary effort to stifle the meteoric rise in prices and inflation generally. It is therefore a collective and individual responsibility at the same time, and if each individual grows aware of it I think he will make the necessary efforts at home and at work to avoid often foolish expenses or that kind of comfort which in a way is at the source of our galloping inflation.

High interest rates have also been the topic of this protracted debate and I think that some of my friends in the opposition have described better than I could the problems confronting people looking for a house or anxious to build a home. And of course that is tragic because I think that the right of ownership is a basic right which every Canadian ought to enjoy. Through partial yet efficient measures the government has attempted to control the rates but it has failed so far. It has tried to come up with programs to help those who find it hard to cope with high interest rates, it has tried to compensate them so they will not lose their property and be able to keep what they have.

Because I entertain no illusions, Mr. Speaker, I would like to say simply that my role as an ordinary member of Parliament does not enable me to find ready solutions. Nor would I pretend to try to find immediate solutions, even if I were working in a team, but as the year is closing and on the eve of the festive season I urge my colleagues to restrain somewhat this vindictive spirit, to change this unduly violent approach, because when we return in January we will still be faced with the same problems, we will still have to work together on both sides in an attempt to find solutions. And I hope that during the recess—we are not going on holidays as some people seem to think—we will have an opportunity to meet our constituents and discuss these with them. I trust we will all be back with a positive attitude, an attitude which will enable both sides of