

The Canadian Economy

Mr. Nielsen: They do not have to worry over there. They are secure. Only about one third of them are not employed by the government. The rest all have their sinecures. There are cabinet ministers, parliamentary secretaries and all the rest of them.

The Prime Minister, on the CBC program "Encounter" said this a few weeks ago:

We feel that the budgetary measures that the government has taken have put the economy on a growth path. The Gross National Product is increasing;—

An hon. Member: That is true.

Mr. Nielsen:

—consumer demand is increasing;—

An hon. Member: That's true.

Mr. Nielsen:

—housing starts are the largest ever;—

An hon. Member: That's true.

Mr. Nielsen:

—inventories are falling; exports are growing.

Mr. Stanfield: They can go out and spend another \$1 billion.

Mr. Nielsen: The Prime Minister says the government has done lots of things for the people. Let him tell that to the 7.1 per cent of the labour force that is unemployed. He admits that it is a shame that there are unemployed people and he says that the unemployed figures are higher than we would like to see. That was back one month ago.

An hon. Member: That was on "Laugh-in".

Mr. Nielsen: And what did he have to say about this winter? He looked forward to this winter with rose coloured glasses and said:

—in terms of the economy itself it will be a better winter.—So in terms of growth of the economy it will be better. In terms of the number of unemployed people and in terms of the relative, the adjusted figures and absolute figures, it will be better.

It is time we stopped fooling around with adjusted, relative, and absolute figures and got some of these unemployed people back to work.

That brings up another thought. When I saw the Minister of Labour sitting on the other side of the House as a backbencher, he always attempted to created the image that he was the champion of the man with the lunch bucket. He always used that phrase when he was devilling for the minister of labour of that time by intervening in labour disputes. I can recall the CBC and Trans-Canada. He always trotted forth his lunch-bucket of the common workingman. He is now Minister of Labour. He has a responsibility to that workingman who is now without work.

• (10:00 p.m.)

Mr. Stanfield: He lost his lunch-bucket.

Mr. Nielsen: Perhaps he did lose his lunch-bucket. It is not an honest image. When discussing a matter as serious as the one now being debated, it is not enough for minis-

[Mr. Nielsen.]

ters and members opposite to get up and spout forth a whole host of statistics and paint rosy pictures. It is time they told it like it is. They should tell us what they are going to do in real terms to meet this critical situation of unemployment.

When the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) was questioned on the same program by the nationally known syndicated writer, Mr. Lynch, he said with regard to unemployment:—it will be better.

MR. LYNCH: It will be better.

MR. TRUDEAU: Oh, yes. You know, barring some disaster from south of the border.

That is the scapegoat they are trying to use for their incompetence. They are trying to say because of the actions of the President of the United States, Canada is in the economic mess it is in today. They know full well that mess is their own creation and they do not know how to get out of it.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Dinsdale: Eric Kierans says that.

Mr. Nielsen: The sensible ones who left the government are the people saying this.

Mr. Francis: Oh, oh!

Mr. Nielsen: We hear the member for Ottawa—

An hon. Member: The member from nowhere.

Mr. Nielsen: As the Prime Minister would say, who the hell is he? Let the member get up and make a contribution to this debate, and let him try to get away from this figure of 7.1 per cent. Let any member opposite try to do the same. Instead of applauding ministers who are saying and doing nothing, they should ruddy well be getting up and representing their constituents by telling it like it is.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Nielsen: I quote from the transcript of the same program:

MR. LYNCH: Well you've had a pretty good disaster from south of the border.

MR. TRUDEAU: Yes, and we have brought in measures which we think will annul that disaster.

Well, the figures today do not exactly bear that out. Later in the program the Prime Minister said:

But whether the end result in the winter and in the spring will be 5 per cent or 4 per cent or more or less, I don't know. What I know is that the economy is moving in the right direction, that the adjusted figures and absolute figures are falling with, as I confessed to the House a few days ago, with the exception of the teenagers.

He said that just three weeks ago. How utterly wrong he was and still is. The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) spoke of incompetence. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. What I really like about the transcript—

Mr. Francis: Tell us what you think of tonight's measures.

Mr. Nielsen: The measures are far too late and far too inadequate. All they are is a refurbishing of programs introduced in the early 1960s by the Diefenbaker government.