

*Measures to Improve Economy*

can obscure the intellectual dishonesty and ill conceived arrogance of this government and of his personal policies in this matter. It is not right for a Prime Minister to make this kind of odious comparison when he talks about unemployment and inflation. He says we are facing the kind of dangers that we faced between the world wars and, then tries to say that the situation in Canada is similar to the situation in countries like Germany where inflation was so rampant that it virtually destroyed that country. If he knows any history at all, he ignores the fact that it was government policy that brought about that situation. The analogy is totally false.

• (3:10 p.m.)

We had a similar analogy in respect of Biafra when the Prime Minister compared that situation with Stalin-grad. He goes on making comparisons in his charming way in the hope that people might believe him. However, no one with an ounce of sense will accept the kind of comparisons the Prime Minister has been making. He is not satisfied with that. He has gone on to falsify the position of the opposition. He has gone on to say, "Well, what is the level of unemployment?". He asks what we mean by full employment and whether it is 3 per cent, 3½ per cent or 4 per cent. He says that one member of the NDP gave a figure of 4 per cent and another gave a figure of 3½ per cent. This is simply not true. Nowhere does the suggestion appear that that is the kind of unemployment the opposition would like to see in this country. He takes things and distorts them to suit his own purpose. This does not further the basic debate we must have.

This is not the first time, Mr. Speaker, Canada has experienced high levels of unemployment. This government did not invent unemployment. During the depression in the 1930's we had an even higher level of unemployment than at present. To some extent we might excuse those years by saying there was a certain amount of ignorance or that that was the pre-Keynesian era in which the people did not really understand how to stimulate the economy and did not know what to do with it. Every country in the world lacked that kind of knowledge. Then, we had another period ten years ago when there were higher levels of unemployment. I believe it is quite obvious that at that time we had government policies which were bungling and incompetent. Never to my knowledge, however, have we had a government that managed to be all these things, ignorant, incompetent, dishonest and arrogant at the same time. There is no excuse for this. There is no excuse for the kind of position this government is taking.

The members of this government never listened. It is not that information has not been available to them, and it is not that they had the support of the experts in the field for their position. They have been told repeatedly that the kind of policies they have brought in would not work. Perhaps they have been listening, but if they have they have obviously been listening to the wrong people, such as government advisers who are out of touch with

[Mr. Saltsman.]

events and who have acquired their own arrogance from being around too long. Perhaps in their insensitivity they have listened to the exporters of Canada, who are concerned not about prosperity in this country but about markets outside of Canada. Some men within the government have shown some courage. A little while ago we had the resignation of the hon. member for Trinity (Mr. Hellyer) who could no longer stomach the government's policies. This was a resignation based on economic policies. More recently the hon. member for Duvernay (Mr. Kierans) had to walk out of the cabinet in the hope that he could perhaps more effectively do something for his country outside the cabinet rather than inside that particular government.

It is a sad commentary in respect of the people holding power when two of their foremost cabinet ministers have to leave because they feel helpless within the framework of a government which has the power to do things but which frustrates the efforts of its own people. It is not without significance that both these men are business people with considerable business experience. They are not radicals; they are not academics; they are not people without some knowledge of what goes on in the economy. They have to carry their views to the people outside government. Unfortunately, I do not believe their efforts will meet with much success because there is a special characteristic in being a Liberal. Even if one parts company with the government over a very serious measure, there is a tendency to always maintain politeness because one must never forget that the Liberals are the establishment and one must never get them too angry even if one finds that he cannot agree with them any more. We have seen cabinet ministers walk out of other governments with blood on their hands because their anger had no limit, but not in the case of Liberals. They always walk out after having given the matter very careful consideration. They know that doors will be closed if they say too many incautious things. Even given that situation, it is obvious that some of them had to leave.

I would hope there will be others on the benches opposite who will rise and support our position. This morning in the Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs I happened to look at a very interesting brief presented by one of the district Liberal associations. I was delighted to see they have been reading our convention papers. This brief was directed at the Canada Development Corporation, and was extremely critical of the government's program, particularly of the level of unemployment it has created. I know there are Liberal associations and Liberal associations, some of which are intelligent and some of which are not intelligent. I wonder why the government always listens to the ones that are not intelligent. The government has a few people who have a certain amount of brains and enough intelligence to look around, find some ideas and listen with an open mind on these matters. It is not too late to take some action. We can still act. There are many options open. Fortunately, we live in a country which is so resilient that even the determined efforts of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson) are not sufficient to kill it.