

*Economic Policies and Unemployment*

which way the Liberal party intended to administer the country.

Now, we are facing an increasing rate of unemployment and economic stagnation. However, the government says nothing; it refuses to revise its positions and to bring about solutions to the evils now undermining the social and economic structures of the country.

And the Prime Minister himself, as reported in the issue of April 3, 1968, of the newspaper *Le Devoir*, on page 5, stated the following:

• (12:10 p.m.)

Now, which men or which nations can claim to be free if they are poverty-stricken?

Thus spoke a roving Prime Minister. I believe it is better for him at this point to be abroad. Perhaps he feels more at ease outside Canada, since yesterday, indeed, bewildering figures on unemployment were published.

We have officially learned that there are 544,000 unemployed people in Canada. We have also learned that 400,000 available students are looking for summer jobs which they are not at all sure to find.

Mr. Speaker, before the rigid, intransigent and irresponsible attitude taken by the Minister of Finance and the Liberal government, I submit that the Trudeau administration is criminally responsible for the social problems deriving from unemployment, since it recognizes there is unemployment but does not show the slightest inclination to do anything about it.

Mr. Speaker, to solve the unemployment situation does not seem complicated to me. It is a matter of showing a little goodwill, sincerity and intelligence. All economists agree that the situation is not complex. The first step is to change the course of our economy, as an immediate solution. For that purpose, a climate of confidence must obviously be created. The policy of the central government in that respect is far from inciting. Investors, contractors, businessmen have little confidence as to the future of their investments. That is why the economy is at a standstill. That is why they do not want to invest capital. That is also why the small contractor does not want to go ahead.

All those problems are due to the sword of Damocles which the Minister of Finance has hung over the heads of taxpayers with his white paper.

For the past few years, the leader of the liberal government has been campaigning

against Quebec separatism. Since the liberal party came to office, separatist movements have grown not only in Quebec but in Western Canada. If the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce does not want to open his eyes, all he has to do in his cross-country trips is to inquire about dissatisfaction sprouting everywhere because the central government is not interested to lend an ear and listen to the message that the people want to give him. He does not hear complaints and he does not care to listen to the opinions of those who are now in a disastrous physical and economic position.

The strong separatist tendency and movement in Quebec is the result of obstinacy and misunderstanding on the part of the Liberal government in Ottawa in respect of human problems in each of the Canadian regions. That is the one and only cause. As far as I am concerned, I hold the federal Liberal government responsible for the social disorders we have witnessed in the last two years.

Obviously, as regards political justice, the Liberal government had everything to gain in maintaining the economic status quo and particularly in tabling the white paper, since the increase in unemployment in Quebec during the election period contributed to the success of its "protégé", the new premier, Mr. Bourassa.

We are not naive enough not to realize that the Minister of Finance has shown a certain administrative artfulness. We know that he has a certain practical political sense, on the electoral level obviously. We also know that it will be impossible for him to try to get elected the next time around if he persists in his position and continues to oppose changes in most of the proposals contained in the white paper. He knows very well that if he tried to get re-elected, he would be defeated and the Liberal government as well.

We know that this is a matter of strategy, but while this program is in force, the Canadian people, the low-paid workers and the unemployed foot the bill. I am amazed to find that our friends on the opposite side, and particularly the Minister of Finance, are devoid of Christian charity and compassion for those who have to bear the brunt of their political manoeuvring.

The situation of unemployment is not disastrous for Quebec alone, though this province is especially concerned. This situation affects presently every region of every province of Canada. If it is more serious in Quebec, it is almost equally so in the Maritime provinces.