

Hon. members on all sides of this House are receiving hundreds of letters protesting attempts by the Trudeau government to grab millions of dollars a year from teachers who never have been unemployed and who never will be unemployed. Yet the Prime Minister and his labour minister have convinced the cabinet that this should be done and are now trying to convince the Commons and the country that we should perpetrate this new injustice, taxation without representation, which is uncomfortably close to fraud.

We shall have more to say in the near future in the House against this measure. I tell the Prime Minister that he had better take a leaf out of British and American history and study the career of George IV who witnessed a revolution because of unjust taxation—taxation without representation or benefit to those taxed.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Wasn't that George III?

Mr. Alkenbrack: I hear a remark on the point I have just made. It still stands. This is the same thing, a close parallel to events leading to 1776.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Does the hon. member not realize that we are just trying to get the right king for him. It was George III, not George IV.

Mr. Alkenbrack: Yes, I have "George III" in my notes. I must have misread my own notes. I have George III here.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Alkenbrack: This non-confidence motion deplors and condemns the Trudeau government's lack of rapport with the provinces and the municipalities; its failure to consult and co-operate with these bodies in providing emergency financial support and employment programs. I know that employment programs generated in an emergency are not always a permanent answer, palliative or cure for the problem, but they help. They helped Franklin D. Roosevelt and his government in the New Deal during the great depression. They gave unemployed men and women a little pride and a renewal of confidence, particularly self-confidence. Employment programs helped Canadians in the depression of the 1930s.

A number of people in Canada and an increasing number of members of this House have no confidence in this government's methods of handling this serious problem. At the same time, Canadian personal self-confidence, although faced with adversity is still buoyant, thank God. The government's lack of imagination and appalling lack of interest in the great social problem of unemployment is tragic. Despite the declarations of the Prime Minister, the Minister of Labour, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson) and the deceptive answers they are giving the press and the people, I contend we are experiencing a serious recession. Many members of this House are old enough to remember the depression of the thirties.

● (8:30 p.m.)

Mr. MacGuigan: It is obvious you did not study economics.

Alleged Non-Support of Employment Programs

Mr. Alkenbrack: I will be talking later about economics. The problem with this government is that their economics are all awry. I wish to draw an analogy here, hoping that it will halt the Prime Minister's headlong and headstrong thirst for personal power—particularly as demonstrated in the omnibus bill, C-207—and bring him back to reality as voiced by the protest of today's non-confidence motion. We hope that this will point up to him the prime importance of the present unemployment situation, which means the collapse of the personal economies and hopes of at least one million Canadians, comprising those who are unemployed and their dependants.

I recall a Prime Minister in my younger days, the much-maligned R. B. Bennett, a man who headed the Canadian government in the worst days ever to befall Canada or any other country. He served the Canadian people in the days of the great depression, a catastrophe that struck with equal force at all countries on earth. Some of the members of the government who are laughing tonight at my words do not even remember the depression because they were not even born at that time. They do not remember the seriousness of the situation of that day.

At a time when the economy of the world was sick, when there were no markets for products, when there were not the means to preserve jobs or to generate new ones, Mr. Bennett none the less set out to create jobs for his people. He set men to work on the roads and in the forests. He co-operated with the provinces and municipalities. He dreamed up projects that resulted in national parks across the country that are enjoyed by our people and by tourists to this day. At a time when any Prime Minister might have been forgiven for throwing up his hands in the face of an impossible task, Mr. Bennett searched his mind and the minds of his colleagues, trying to dream up jobs.

He tried because he cared, because he considered his mandate to govern as a sacred trust, not as something to be thrown away or treated as lightly as it is today. Because he cared, the Canadian people suffered less than they might have. Needless to say, Mr. Bennett's record was judged on the basis of events that were played on the world stage rather than on the record of what he did for Canada.

On the other hand, we now have a Prime Minister who has at his disposal the wealth of a great nation, a nation with a much larger population and many times the wealth it had in the thirties. Today the economy of the world has never been more dynamic or stable. If the present Prime Minister cared even a fraction as much as some of his predecessors for the plight of his fellow Canadians, he would not be tempted to joke about the fact that almost 700,000 Canadians are looking for jobs.

Would a Prime Minister who cared about his people even consider creating massive and crippling unemployment in order to cure inflation, or for any reason? The Prime Minister says that inflation has been licked and that things are looking up. Even as he says that, the Dominion Bureau of Statistics reports 130,000 more unemployed than in the preceding month. The Prime Minister says that inflation has been licked, and then