

Inflation

hon. member for St. Boniface explain inflation to labour and tell them: "Tighten your belts".

Madam Speaker, we have come to a point in this country when we must look for positive solutions.

In this House it should not be said that the Progressist Conservatives are no good because they are conservatives, the Liberals are no good because they are liberals or the social credit this does not make sense because it has never been implemented. Acting that way, Madam Speaker, would generate in this Parliament a partisan and political spirit rejecting solutions that would really solve the problem.

● (2100)

Madam Speaker, I might be convinced that Liberals are not financed by financial conglomerates such as banks, Dominion Stores Limited, Steinberg Limited, Argus Corporation and Power Corporation only if they were honest in their attitude and their search for solutions and if they accepted to listen and study the creditist proposals even to reject them later. But, Madam Speaker, when they reject it before discussions and explanations are started, it shows that those people have interests to protect. This is why I hope that the Progressive Conservatives will understand the meaning of our motion.

The object of our motion is not to implement the social credit theory as of tomorrow morning; it is rather to make this government understand that the only solution to our inflation problem is to help the human being workers, unemployed, farmers, deprived, and consumers alike. If the Liberals find it funny, it is their problem, they will be judged in due course, but tonight I ask my colleagues of the Opposition to explain and prove to this government that it is strong, it is really on the people's side on the side of the weak on the side of financial conglomerates such as banks, Dominion Stores Limited and Steinberg Limited. And then, Madam Speaker, the opposition will have raised an important debate thanks to the Social Credit Party of Canada. We shall have made a step forward by showing our solidarity on behalf of the Canadian people to this government which defends the wealthy corporations. We shall have shown the government that it is time to protect the average citizen, the builders of our country.

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, first of all I wish to thank the Social Crediters for having proposed this motion on inflation. I cannot support their motion, but I appreciate their sincere concern about the inflationary threat and their determination to fight it effectively.

[English]

I am speaking tonight during this debate, although I took part in a debate a week or so ago on a similar motion put forward by the NDP, because I regard this subject of such great importance, and because I welcome the opportunity to speak particularly to those members of the government party who are present and to impress upon them, since they have the responsibility at this time, the grave importance of the menace that confronts us, and the importance of a real assault on the problems of inflation, consistent of course with methods that enable our economy to continue to grow, expand and provide employment.

[Mr. Fortin.]

We are in all probability three and a half years away from the next general election. Surely we can discuss this matter with a view to reaching some positive and constructive approaches. We are some months beyond the last election, and surely we do not have to refight it again in discussing these issues. Surely in most parts of this House there is an agreement now that there is no simplistic solution to this problem we are confronting.

I do not know whether the hon. member for St. Boniface (Mr. Guay) is making an interjection or conducting a private conversation, but if he does not mind I will pay no attention to him tonight and just present the views I wish to present seriously to his colleagues who are prepared to sit and listen. I think he will listen too, knowing he is a man of—

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): If you say something that makes sense I will listen.

An hon. Member: You don't have sense enough to know what makes sense.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Stanfield: The government is fond of saying that every party in the House has simplistic solutions to this problem. It keeps hurling at us, for example, that the only solution we have is prices and wages control, as they call it, or prices and incomes control. We never put that forward as a comprehensive solution to this problem. I want to say that, in advancing that appropriate fiscal and monetary policy, in all probability there would never have been a time in which such a policy would have had a better chance of succeeding than following the election on July 8, 1974.

I do not rise tonight to argue about the last election or the next. I rise tonight to try to persuade supporters of the government to face up to their responsibilities and present, to the House and the country, an attack against inflation.

I think what the hon. member for Don Valley (Mr. Gillies) had to say before the dinner hour was very appropriate and just. The pre-election policy of the government, concentrating on shortages, was surely too simplistic to be regarded as satisfactory. Inflation in Canada could not be solved by increasing supply in Canada if it were true, as the government said, that the problem really was international. This is obviously contradictory. When the hon. member for Don Valley said that the government had a tendency to give the impression—I want to be fair to the government House leader—to the country that these problems are really international and that there is not too much that we can do about them, I think he has a real point which he expressed eloquently.

● (2110)

The truth of the matter is that many Canadians today feel helpless in the face of inflation. They have been persuaded by various forces that there is really not very much that can be done within Canada, and that the government cannot do very much to deal with inflation. As the hon. member for Don Valley expressed it, this is an exceedingly serious state of affairs when the people of the