

The Address—Mr. Pearson

Mr. Pearson: If they jeer at these proposals now because they have been so successful in creating opportunities to work, I wonder if they noticed in the press this morning a report of experts in Washington on unemployment statistics in the seven leading western industrial countries. Who was at the top of the list in terms of unemployment? Canada.

An hon. Member: Don't gloat over it.

Mr. Pearson: That is the record of this government.

Some hon. Members: Shame.

An hon. Member: That was in 1960.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Mr. Speaker, may I ask a question?

Some hon. Members: Sit down.

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): May I ask the Leader of the Opposition a question?

Mr. Ricard: He is afraid of questions.

Some hon. Members: Sit down.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I would appreciate the co-operation of hon. members in taking their seats when I am on my feet, so that I can say what I have to say. I have been having some trouble hearing the debate in the last few moments. Unless the leader of Her Majesty's loyal opposition is prepared to yield the floor to the Minister of Justice then the Minister of Justice should not pursue his attempt to make an interrogation.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): I assure you I would not have pursued it if the Leader of the Opposition had not indicated—

Some hon. Members: Sit down.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton):—that he was prepared to allow me to ask a question. Hon. members opposite were making such a howling noise that you could not hear the Leader of the Opposition indicate that he would accept a question.

Some hon. Members: Sit down.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. If there have been interjections that have not been too acceptable on either side, it has been very difficult for the Chair to hear them even with the use of a hearing aid. Accordingly I give the floor to the Leader of the Opposition and he can yield it to the Minister of Justice if he so desires.

Mr. Pearson: If the minister has a question I will be very glad indeed to hear it.

[Mr. Ricard.]

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Would the Leader of the Opposition indicate what period these statistics to which he referred cover, because I happen to know they were not recent ones?

Mr. Pearson: I will be glad to do that. The report was for the year 1960, a year during which this government was in power.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Two years ago.

Mr. Pickersgill: That was the year of the great recovery.

Mr. Pearson: That was the year of the minister's great recovery. That was the year when unemployment was going to go with the snow.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Give us up to date figures now.

Mr. Pearson: The figures to which I have referred covered Canada and other countries and the Canadian figure was 7 per cent. The next highest, the United States, was 5.6 per cent. That was 1960.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Will you give us 1962 now?

Mr. Pearson: The minister will correct me if I am wrong but I believe the 1961 unemployment figure in Canada was higher than 7 per cent. I think it was 7.2 per cent, so perhaps the minister had better stick to 1960.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Will you give us up to date figures? Give us 1962.

Mr. Pearson: The Minister of Justice says, what about 1962? We are still in 1962 and by the end of 1962 the minister probably will not be around to ask for them.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): More evasion.

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, these are the important measures which, if put into effect, could do something to cure this economic evil of unemployment. What it adds up to is this: We will make it possible for the municipalities to have a massive increase in construction. We know this is going to cost money but, Mr. Speaker, it will be an investment expenditure by the government, an investment which will more than pay for itself in increased employment and incomes for Canadians. Half a billion dollars of construction means the equivalent of a year's work, I am informed, for 100,000 men, and their employment in turn would mean stimulation for a great deal of other businesses.

Well, that is part of our plan for more jobs, for better places for Canadians to live and work. Our point No. 2 is the promotion of new industries. Now, the government has talked a lot about that in the last five years, what they were going to do to promote new industries. However, they have talked more