

*Economic Conditions*

House but people in general, especially the underprivileged. If we are serious when making such statements, I think the first thing to do, with the co-operation of members of the House from any area, is to try to solve that serious situation. I am in a position to make such a statement since I know that my riding of Lapointe is home to an unacceptable number of unemployed. There are underprivileged people who must experience almost insuperable difficulties caused by inflation. That situation is most regrettable and it prevails throughout Quebec, Canada, in fact, the whole world. If we look at the situation in Canada as compared with other countries around the world, I think we must recognize that, all in all, it is not as bad as that of many other countries.

Mr. Speaker, we have unemployment in Canada, but there are several reasons for it. Since I am particularly interested in that problem, like many of my colleagues, I have had occasion to realize that there exists a considerable, serious and worrisome discrepancy between the courses that are given and the courses organized by the manpower centres. Let me explain myself. It often happens, Mr. Speaker, that Manpower Canada buys courses from the provincial government and limits itself to simply buying so many slots in the courses given by the provincial governments. It seems there is a lack of coordination between the two levels of government, and that the people who take the courses, once they have completed them and obtained their certificate, cannot get jobs corresponding to the training received.

Mr. Speaker, we can see in the papers that a lot of jobs are being offered and we cannot figure out how come there is a very high unemployment rate on the one hand and positions which cannot apparently be filled on the other. It is a situation we have often noticed, not in isolated areas such as ours of course where employment is rather restrictive, but in other regions. And I wonder, Mr. Speaker, if special attention should not be given by the two levels of government to coordinating their operations so that those who are taking training courses at any level of specialization and who are entering the labour market could find challenging opportunities to join the labour force and find a way to earn their living. Knowing the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Cullen), I can say he is conscious of those problems and I have no intention whatsoever of blaming him for this situation but I would invite him and his officials to look into that matter which seems serious and whose solution might help cut down the unemployment that we are unfortunately faced with.

Mr. Speaker, today's motion blames the government for doing nothing or not showing any leadership when it comes to unemployment and inflation. Of course, I want to protest against this statement which is, in my opinion, much too general. I can say the situation has improved since I first became the member for Lapointe. I remember 1968, Mr. Speaker, when the unemployment rate was high and when there were not any concrete programs to assist unemployed people living in outlying areas.

Of course, the general policy of investing in large cities like Montreal, Quebec or others has always been applied by gov-

ernments since they consider these important cities are the motors and that investment must be made there to keep the general economy of provinces growing. But it was realized in recent years that to ensure the development of important centres, it was also necessary to assist people living in the vicinity. For these people are entitled to live outside large centres and if they all decided to live in great cities, there would be serious environment problems and the quality of life would even be worse than it is today. Since then the government has established programs to help unemployed people in slow-growth areas. The Local Initiatives Program, Mr. Speaker, even if in fact it exists, must only be considered as an incomplete measure which nevertheless helps in some practical and concrete way to solve the unemployment problem.

● (1720)

I would like to express my unconditional support to the principle of those programmes, which provide for substantial investments into remote or rural areas in order to help ease the unemployment situation prevailing there.

Mr. Speaker, these programmes have developed in the right direction. I remember a few years ago, these programmes were package deals devised for those regions without regards to the specific problems affecting each constituency. The money, for example, for Opportunity for Youth, the then Local Initiatives Programme, was given to a region as a whole, and the MPS from these regions had a hard time allocating the funds. Nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, we have to admit over the last few years, the new programmes have taken into consideration the needs of the constituencies and the fact that the federal representatives of a riding were able, as worthwhile representatives of their constituents, to ascertain the local needs that were to be met. That is why these monies were re-distributed within the constituencies.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this move towards decentralization, which is often referred to extremely vaguely, represents in the case of these programs a practical and useful solution which should be accelerated and intensified rather than replaced by large programs which, as I said earlier, have a tendency to benefit exclusively major centres, to the disadvantage of cities outside metropolises.

Mr. Speaker, if I may, I would like to say a few words about the contribution of the Progressive Conservative member for St. John's West (Mr. Crosbie) who took it upon himself earlier to make a judgment on the situation in Quebec. I did not ask him, but I would be curious to know when he visited Quebec, whom he talked to and how long he stayed to be able to make such a rash judgment. I will not make any judgment about what is going on in Newfoundland because I do not feel qualified to do so. I would have liked it better if he had had the wisdom and the intelligence not to make such a definitive judgment as to say that if there are problems in Quebec at the present time, only the federal government is to blame. Mr. Speaker, I believe that this judgment is false and pernicious and gives a completely inaccurate picture of the situation.