

million a day in unemployment insurance, I move, seconded by the hon. member for York-Simcoe (Mr. Stevens):

● (2132)

That the Prime Minister immediately take steps to convene a first ministers' conference to deal with the critical problems of high unemployment and unsatisfactory real growth, hopefully to reverse the banana republic-like image this country presently enjoys.

Mr. Breau: What happened to that motion?

Mr. Alexander: An hon. member opposite is asking me what happened to that motion. The Liberals voted it down. The Liberals said no. The Liberals indicated that they did not want a first ministers' conference. I should not get carried away with the remarks of a backbencher.

I should like to refer to what the Prime Minister said. He said that the federal government is taking its responsibilities and so are the provinces. Also he indicated that at this stage the bringing together of the two would have no effect beyond that of satisfying me.

Back in July we on this side were telling the Prime Minister to get off his what-you-may-call-it.

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): Oh, oh!

Mr. Alexander: Now we are hearing from the Minister of Labour.

Mr. Munro (Hamilton East): What about industrial peace?

Mr. Alexander: Industrial peace is something this country requires, desires, and should have. The Minister of Labour should get on the ball and bring about some meaningful solutions for the problems besetting industry and labour. If that were done, perhaps the problem with the Japanese would be non-existent. No matter what the minister says about the number of days lost because of strikes, the question remains that there is no confidence in this country. The Minister of Labour should get on a Lear jet, or any other form of transportation, and go to Japan to give them the same message he is giving Canadians about days lost because of strikes.

When I think of the problems Canada has faced in the past nine or ten years, I wonder why so many Canadian people want this government to continue in office. The government has destroyed the country and its initiative, and our image is at an all-time low. Farmers are alienated, senior citizens are alienated, and youth are alienated. Labour people are mad at the Minister of Labour because he was less than honest with them in terms of wage and price controls. Industry has been hamstrung by the introduction of wage and price controls without notice. This has destroyed initiative and does not allow industry to be more productive.

What is happening to my country? Where are we going? What is in the future? Suddenly the new Minister of Finance (Mr. Chrétien) realized that the March, 1977 budget was a disaster. Members on this side of the House kept telling the government that. It replied by asking us to wait until the new measures took effect. That was its usual answer, and the

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government is still waiting for that to happen. In the meantime the present Minister of Finance, the supposed new messiah, bootlegged in a new budget. It was not called a budget, but it was a budget in any event. People are looking for something. They want to know what a budget really means. In my humble opinion, a budget should set a course of positive direction in terms of hope for the future. Is there any hope in this country as a result of his speech? I see a Liberal member laughing behind the curtains. He is aware that no one has any hope in terms of that speech.

When a budget is brought in, or when a speech that can be called a budget is brought in, people want to believe it will bring about a feeling of confidence in the economy. Is there any confidence in the economy as a result of that speech? No, there is none whatsoever.

Mr. Breau: Five point two per cent.

Mr. Alexander: Now that hon. Liberal member is talking about the 5.2 per cent. That is what is known as the manipulation of figures dishonestly.

Mr. Breau: What do you call 292,000 jobs?

Mr. Alexander: It was hoped the budget would create a climate for confidence in the government. What kind of confidence is evident when one picks up the *Ottawa Citizen* and sees in half inch print: "Effigy of Trudeau Burned by Unemployed Workers"? That is indicative of the confidence present in Canada.

One would expect this type of budgetary action to address itself to the needs of Canadians. Is Your Honour aware of what was in that speech? The former minister of finance made a mistake in terms of taking away the proceeds of insurance policies on the deaths of the owners. Is that what is called looking after the needs of Canadians? That provision attacked widows and the children of deceased until all hell broke loose. Suddenly the new minister, as is usually the case, realized a boo-boo had been made, and withdrew it.

This government attacks those who cannot help themselves. I remember when the senior citizens were told to get out of the work force. They were not allowed unemployment insurance benefits. They were sent out to pasture and told to do whatever they could, because the government was through with them. That is what the government does for people.

Mr. Breau: Not me.

Mr. Alexander: I hear the Liberal member saying, "Not me". I will give him credit. He had guts enough to vote against the bill. The government brought in a monstrous policy known as spouse's allowance. I see the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) is interested in what I am saying. The government gave some poor spouse some money, as long as the husband or the wife was 65 years of age. The moment the husband or wife died, that money was taken back. Is that looking after the needs of Canadians?