

Anti-Inflation Policies

that is pensioners, veterans and labourers, whose income cannot increase sufficiently to allow them to face the rise in the cost of living. The government is also concerned about the owners of bonds, which, for the most part have been issued by governments.

Mr. Speaker, inflation has no place in a just society, but there are no drastic, perfect and speedy measures available to control it. There will always be those who will claim that government measures to fight inflation are too harsh or unjust. Nothing is more unfair than yielding to the extravagant requests of privileged groups and then passing on the price increases to those who are least able to bear them.

After many years of economic expansion, we are now undergoing a period of stabilization which has produced some economic slowdown. The measure of success of government policies will determine how long this period will last. We hope they do succeed, so that the restrictions can be eased as soon as possible and the Canadian economy leap forward again.

It should be underlined, in connection with the fight against inflation, that there is no conflict between the theories of those who are concerned with individuals and worried by unemployment on the one hand, and on the other the arguments of those who have only monetary stability in mind, because the primary concern should be to maintain the value of the dollar at its present level, failing which there will be difficulties and suffering far in excess of the cost of the campaign to curb inflation.

The Prices and Incomes Commission set up by the government has been very successful until today. We should commend the members for their good work and encourage them in their fight against inflation. Incidentally, this Commission recently launched a nationwide advertising campaign on this subject. It also published a table showing that salary increases since 1965 represent a true gain much lower than the apparent one. Therefore, it is essential to follow the advice of economists and well-informed people who affirm rightly that keeping inflationary pressures in check must remain government's first priority.

However, while it is fighting inflation with the means at its disposal and within its jurisdiction, the federal government is also aware that we must fight unemployment in the slow-growth areas, while promoting spe-

[Mr. Forest.]

cially the establishment of new businesses or the expanding of existing ones.

That is why the government has created the Department of Regional Economic Expansion which has, contrary to most others, an increased budget. And this program, which has up to now been quite successful will be even more so as the increase in production is felt. Mr. Speaker, my only regret is that the program will not be extended to my whole constituency. Despite the fears which it arouses, we hear, for instance, the opposition members complain because it is not applied in the regions they represent.

● (9:20 p.m.)

Mr. Speaker, I trust that the textile policy which will be announced in a few days, as indicated this afternoon by the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Pepin), following the representations we made about this industry, the survival of which is essential to the development of our regions, will result in rationalizing this industry and in ensuring its orderly development.

I hope that everybody will realize the seriousness of the present situation. If everyone will show good will and co-operate readily, the economic slowdown will be rapidly stopped. Moreover, if our country can remain united and strong—an essential condition—it will have a brilliant future, if we want it and if we use the means at our disposal to reach this aim.

[English]

Mr. Robert C. Coates (Cumberland-Colchester North): Mr. Speaker, today the leader of my party indicated to the unemployed of the nation this party's deep concern over the government's policies, or rather lack of policies, with respect to unemployment. It was unfortunate that the television cameras were not in the chamber so that the Canadian people could compare the contribution of the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) with the words uttered by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson), who attempted to explain the government's academic philosophy in which there is no charity. It was an example, if one were needed, of the heartless approach of the government to the problems of the unemployed.

Mr. Benson: What is the name of your book?

Mr. Coates: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance, who has just made an interjection,