

Mr. Speaker, they have waited for the stores and warehouses to overflow, for plants to close their doors, and for thousands of workers to be unemployed, and now they hire three persons: Mr. Annis from Ottawa, Mr. St-Laurent, well known in Quebec political circles, and a person named Campbell.

Mr. Speaker, even if the name of the latter appears on soup cans, I still think that this commission's conclusions will be "for the birds".

Again, the government must stop questioning the value—

Mr. Deputy Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order. I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but I must advise him that his time has now expired.

● (5:20 p.m.)

[English]

Mr. Ray Perrault (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, let me say at the outset that all of us share a desire to provide more assistance for the unemployed. I am sure that none of us would claim to have a monopoly on good will toward those who are seeking employment or who have lost jobs because of economic vicissitudes.

As the motion before us indicates, this is not the responsibility of any one level of government. It is not the responsibility of the federal government alone, of municipal government alone or of provincial government alone. Indeed, the responsibility to combat the current unsatisfactory levels of unemployment in society cannot be confined to government alone and it is fair to say that it goes beyond government. The responsibility extends to all organized and unorganized groups and to the entire population of the country.

For example, the great trade union movement has a responsibility to provide leadership to find satisfactory solutions to the problem of unemployment. Management, similarly, has a responsibility. Those in our farm community have a similar responsibility. Another point has been made very clear by the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) over the past two years. He has emphasized repeatedly that the job of managing the economy in this country involves the balancing of alternatives and designing policies which are not only satisfactory in the short run but are likely to achieve the best over-all results.

● (5:30 p.m.)

I have been in the House all afternoon and have listened to the speeches of opposition spokesmen. I have been profoundly disappointed by some of the speeches by these members who would like to replace the present government. I commend certain opposition members for their acutely developed powers of hindsight. As well, some of them have told us what is wrong, without providing solutions. I have a pamphlet which was written by the hon. member for York South (Mr. Lewis) in 1943. This eloquent member has been an author in his day. He

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defined all the problems at that time. He said "we must increase wage levels," "destroy the control of monopolies," "provide guarantees for security," "abandon colonialism" and "bring dignity and a racial harmony to Canada." But not a suggestion as to how. It is strange that after so many years in public life this man still fails to advance specific ideas and solutions to the problem of unemployment and other difficulties which beset our economy. His ability to provide original ideas is as elusive as the quest for the mother lode or as elusive as a piece of pork in a can of pork and beans.

What was the "solution" which he advanced today? He started by saying that we should begin our fight against unemployment by scheduling a federal-provincial-municipal conference. That idea is hardly revolutionary. And then we heard from the financial spokesman for the official opposition. He said the situation in the Maritimes is very difficult and that this government does not have an understanding of the unemployment situation there. He is suffering from at least one type of myopia or loss of memory.

In 1958, when the Leader of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) was Premier of Nova Scotia there was a Conservative government in Ottawa. The rates of Maritime unemployment in Nova Scotia were 11.2 per cent in 1958, 11.1 per cent in 1959, 10.6 in 1960 and 12.1 in 1961. We must not forget the history of this country. Those who advance easy solutions in this debate should be aware of the fact that when they had responsibility for government they were not able to provide easy solutions.

I will not spend a great deal of time on the first part of the motion. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson) in his policy statement of October 13 and in reply to questions since then has reviewed the alternatives which confront the government at this time. Stated in its essence, this government, like all governments, has to make choices. It has had to make some basic decisions to get the most permanent results out of the limited amount of new funds which it can divert to government purposes—to direct as many additional resources as possible to measures which will benefit permanently the growth of the economy.

Last June the Minister of Finance announced accelerated and increased payments to the provinces in the amount of \$75 million. In addition, \$150 million remaining to be spent under the technical and vocational school training program are to be disbursed to the provinces in this fiscal year and the fiscal year 1971-72. On October 13 the Minister of Finance concluded that "the effect of these measures was to add \$150 million to our budgetary requirements and \$150 million to our non-budgetary requirements, or \$300 million in all—a very considerable figure."

At the time of that policy speech the minister further announced that he would "ask the approval of Parliament for the expenditure"—this figure should be borne in mind when we talk in terms of increasing unemployment benefits on a temporary basis—"of an additional \$60 million to be directed very specifically to the allevia-