

Canadian Economy

are designed to make Canada strong, united, and a free, democratic nation. We must take steps to improve our democratic processes rather than continuously detracting from them.

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, the motion before the House is one that is all-encompassing, covering a great deal of area. At the outset, let me say that when the vote comes later on this evening we will support the non-confidence motion. Not that we support everything contained in the motion, but we do interpret it as a general motion of non-confidence in the government's economic policies and for that reason we will vote for it.

I should like to put in a disclaimer or two regarding some of the wording of the motion. The last part reads "to make loans available to the provinces at an interest rate not exceeding the cost of administration". I think wording such as that leaves a lot to be desired. I should like to hear from some of the Social Credit members what exactly is meant by that. For example, today the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) talked about the federal government borrowing money by issuing Canada savings bonds at 9 per cent plus interest. Are they going to lend this money to the provinces at no interest at all except for the administration charge? Canada Pension Plan funds are lent to the provinces now, but are they proposing to lend such funds at a low interest rate or at no interest rate at all? What would happen to pensioners under the plan if that were the case?

I share the concern of members of the Social Credit party about the banks and financial institutions being at the centre of many of our economic problems. Our solutions in this regard may be different, but in many ways perhaps they are similar. For example, I believe that those who control the finances of this nation control the destiny of the nation. The assets of the chartered banks, insurance companies, trust companies, mortgage companies and of all financial institutions in Canada are immense. These financial institutions have much more impact on public policy and on public life in Canada than many of the governments in this country.

If we are to have a planned economy, the time has come to have public ownership of banks and financial institutions. I do not understand why we continue to support a system where the private banks work hand in hand, essentially, with the multinational corporations and the fiscal and monetary policy of the country reflects that of the United States. I should like to see banking in this country publicly owned, operated as a public utility. This would give Canadians much more freedom than the course suggested by the hon. member for Athabasca (Mr. Yewchuk) who said government should not interfere in the economy, that so-called free enterprise should run the economy. In essence, in today's society this would mean the law of the jungle where the big fellows get bigger and stomp on the toes of the mice. I say that 95 per cent of the people would have fewer freedoms and liberties under that system than if there were public ownership of our financial institutions and Canadian resources. Under such a system, Canadians, through their government in a democratic way, would make the decisions concerning resource development and finance.

I want to turn to the general question of the economy. I should like to tell the parliamentary secretary who will

[Mr. Yewchuk.]

reply that some very serious problems are arising, on which I hope he will comment. I want to spend some time talking about unemployment. I have the feeling that the government has forgotten about unemployment or they are ignoring it in their so-called fight against inflation. The anti-inflation bill which recently went through the House is one that, at best, will have a neutral effect on unemployment and, at worst, will aggravate the situation across the country by slowing down the economy, particularly in developing regions such as the Atlantic provinces and much of Quebec.

Figures released by Statistics Canada today show that unemployment this past month of November has increased by 35 per cent compared with November of 1974, when there were 542,000 Canadians out of work. Last November there were 734,000 Canadians out of work. This means an increase from 5.5 per cent seasonally adjusted, to 7.3 per cent seasonally adjusted, or that 192,000 more Canadians are out of work. This is a serious matter. The government must direct its energies toward achieving a full employment policy. We must put people back to work so we can increase productivity in general, particularly in regions like Quebec and the Atlantic provinces where for years there has been a very high rate of unemployment.

● (1600)

Let us look at the regional breakdown of unemployment in Canada. I should like to spend a moment or two putting some of these rates on the record, beginning with Newfoundland where the unemployment rate is 18.1 per cent. Let us not forget that there are some who are unemployed but who are not reflected in these unemployment statistics. I have in mind those who are not registered with Manpower; those who are on welfare. There are those who have given up trying to get jobs and are no longer registered, as well as treaty Indians in places like Saskatchewan. So there are a great many people who are not actually reflected in the statistics we get from Statistics Canada each month. We could probably add another 1 per cent or 2 per cent to the 7.3 per cent we now have, making the actual figure at least 8.5 per cent and perhaps even as high as 9 per cent or 10 per cent. These are Canadians who are able-bodied and would work if we had jobs for them.

The rate of unemployment in Newfoundland is 18.1 per cent, compared to 14.8 per cent one year ago. This is an increase of 3.3 per cent. One could go right down the list. In the province of Quebec 7.1 per cent of the people were unemployed last year, and it was 9.2 per cent in November of this year. There are 9.2 per cent of Quebecers unemployed, yet the federal government fails to bring in any new programs to combat this very serious social and economic problem. Even in the province of Ontario, where unemployment was 3.7 per cent a year ago, it is now up to 4.4 per cent and is becoming a serious problem as it is right across the country. Only in the prairie provinces is the unemployment rate low, being 2.9 per cent in Alberta, 4 per cent in Saskatchewan and 3.7 per cent in Manitoba.

I ask this government what it intends to do to bring down the unemployment rate in Canada. What are its plans to stimulate the economy, providing more jobs while at the same time fighting inflation? Its failure to do anything is the reason I will be voting non-confidence in the government later this evening.