

The Canadian Economy

not a member in this House who has not had complaints from his own constituents about the long delays in processing certain claims; from the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson), who says that the Canadian economy is on the course "I envisaged in my June budget".

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Nielsen: That is about as honest—

Mr. Stanfield: Or cold-blooded.

Mr. Nielsen: —or cold-blooded as this government is wont to be on these things. They snow us with statistics. They try to paint a rosy picture. I think the worst offender on the government side is that well snowed Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Revenue, I believe, the hon. member for Calgary South (Mr. Mahoney).

An hon. Member: He belongs to the Minister of Finance.

Mr. Nielsen: The Minister of Finance; that is even worse. To him everything is rosy. Everything is going along fine. And the Parliamentary Secretary to Prime Minister (Mr. Danson) has thrown the first hand grenade to start off an international trade war. One must only assume that he did it with the knowledge and consent of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau). They all paint a glowing picture; yet not one of the ministers and not one of those faceless donkeys on the other side of the House will make a contribution by referring to the rate of unemployment existing in this country. The percentage stands at 7.1 per cent, the highest in a decade. And what do they do? They shrug the figures off and trot forward as a cure-all for this tragic situation promises that were universally implemented by the previous Progressive Conservative government. They march those programs forward.

An hon. Member: Which previous government?

Mr. Nielsen: We need honesty from the minister who has just resumed his seat. He says that there is a new feature to this whole program.

Mr. Stanfield: It is new and improved.

Mr. Nielsen: It is on-the-job training. This program has been in effect for a decade. Why, if it had not been for the shortsightedness of this government in cutting back on that program, it might still be making a contribution to relieve the unemployment facing us now. Talk about confusion; here is confusion personified.

We are in the middle of debating the tax reform legislation in the form of Bill C-259, and the government announces that it has some 100 amendments to make to that bill. Now, the government trots forth another package of confusion. I ask, how in the world are we to conduct a logical debate, which the minister responsible for the Wheat Board talked of in his contribution, on the basis of this kind of confusion?

Mr. Stanfield: Do not go too far away, now.

An hon. Member: I see the Prime minister is leaving.

Mr. Nielsen: I guess the heat is a little much for the Prime Minister. I do not blame him for leaving. He is packed and ready to go. He should go for good.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Nielsen: They reviled the winter works program and the on-the-job training program, as well as the vocational training program that was implemented by the previous Conservative government. The Minister of Labour was in the House at that time, as was the Minister of Justice (Mr. Turner).

Mr. Stanfield: This program is new and improved.

Mr. Nielsen: It is new and improved. They scorned our program, scoffed at it and spurned it. They spurned all suggestions which have come from this side of the House over many months, knowing that there would be a severe crisis in the economy and in unemployment. Now, suddenly, they have clasped these programs to their breasts as if they were the originators of these schemes.

An hon. Member: They think they have a new idea.

Mr. Baldwin: It is just a new breast.

Mr. Nielsen: It is a silicone breast. In 1963, when all these Liberals trooped across the country, and there are lots of them here although I notice that the much maligned rump on my right is not here in force tonight, they promised that there would be one million new jobs a year. One million new jobs a year was what they would produce; yet we heard the Minister of Finance taking pride in there being only 200,000 more jobs this year than a year ago. What a pitiful attempt that was to explain that hundreds of thousands of people in this country have been made unemployed through the deliberate actions and policies of this government.

An Hon. Member: Shame.

Mr. Nielsen: It is gratifying to note that finally the government has agreed that there is an emergency. This bears some examination, since repeated attempts have been made on this side of the House to adjourn the House in order to carry on an emergency debate such as this. Such attempts have been made for several months. Yet, all of a sudden Statistics Canada figures are released for unemployment this month and then this becomes an emergency. Since the government consents, we are allowed to debate it.

There is to be \$160 million in a winter works program for building federal buildings, exhibition buildings and CMHC works.

Mr. Stanfield: We should build a memorial for this government and, indeed, for the minister.

Mr. Nielsen: They need a memorial. All this talk about multiplier effect is all gobbledygook. It is an attempt to camouflage the real trouble in which they find themselves. There is nothing really constructive here which will provide remedies and jobs to get us out of the hole. I talked about honesty a minute ago. Oh, yes, the Prime Minister marches forward. He has gone out in order to build a new program to meet the economic crisis caused by the United States "Nixonomics".

An hon. Member: He wants more parliamentary secretaries.