

**An hon. Member:** What about the PQ?

**Mr. La Salle:** I will come back to that, Mr. Speaker. Unemployment is increasing, the economy is regressing and the government is giving funds right and left, for unemployment insurance or all kinds of subsidies to enable the Department of Regional Economic Expansion to restore a faltering economy.

Quite recently we were still referring to a reduction of 2,000 employees in the footwear industry, Mr. Speaker. I am not lying when I say that those controls have been ineffective and when the minister asks what are our proposals, we are specifically demanding the removal of those measures which did not attain the objectives sought by this Parliament and consequently, those investors, business heads who would be aware of the long-term measures of the government, which they do not know, could be responsible for an economic recovery, because those policies and the government's waiting have stopped the decisions of the business community.

In our view, Mr. Speaker, the only way to stimulate the economy at the present time is to abolish the controls and to replace them by less strict measures which, at the same time as they would curtail inflation, would above all restore an atmosphere of confidence in investment, and would in turn rapidly increase productivity and create employment. It is very possible that the government does not intend to maintain the controls indefinitely, but that is not the question. The question is to suppress them immediately to accelerate economic recovery. The government can and must not make a second mistake with the controls, and delay suppressing them as it delayed introducing them. The Prime Minister likes to talk about crimes against national unity, well I think it would be one, and a serious one, to prolong beyond the next two weeks a system of price and wage control which is dangerously jeopardizing our economy and creating concern and hardship for thousands of people in this country.

But let us not forget that in this House we are probably among the privileged. When we talk about inflation the objectives which we are given are seen with our reason. For those who earn \$20,000 and more, it is always possible to make ends meet, and we can accommodate ourselves and pay for our cigarettes or any other products once the price have been raised, but the real victims of inflation are not in this House, Mr. Speaker. These are the workers, men and women who have to bear the real burden of inflation, or those for whom any salary raise is automatically eaten up by a similar raise in prices. The real victims of inflation are above all those who live on a pension or on small savings—

**An hon. Member:** What about the pensioners?

**Mr. La Salle:** Someone is talking about pensioners who have been given a 60-cent raise from time to time. Well, if the Liberal members are satisfied and if they can prove that the raise in old age pension payments corresponds to a similar raise in the cost of living, go and tell this to those who have to manage on a miserable old age pension. Or to those who try to

### *Anti-Inflation Act*

survive on a meagre pension and who are unemployed, or to the one million unemployed, who are below the poverty level.

I was going to forget to mention the student population, Mr. Speaker, for whom scholarships have not been increased while educational costs kept rising. This government could not care less about the misery and the problems suffered by people because of a policy which has not been efficient and which, according to many, has been a total failure if we compare ourselves with our neighbour to the south who, without controls, has succeeded better than us in keeping inflation at a reasonable rate.

What all these people are asking, Mr. Speaker, is that Parliament stop playing the game of politics and instead care for their future and their well-being. In a country that can offer so much hope and promises as ours, I cannot accept that for partisan reasons, the social crisis and the economic injustice that prevail are allowed to continue indefinitely. It seems to me that more so than ever time has come to close ranks and work together to correct these problems and put our country back on the track of prosperity. Mr. Speaker, these are our objectives and I would not hide the fact that I am very disappointed to see so many government members taking refuge behind a few ministers who are trying to defend an objective that has been the sorry failure which we know, while others seem to have found an opportunity to play games. I do not mind being told about the government of Quebec, Mr. Speaker, but some find it amusing, as I said not so long ago, to provoke a government that has problems of its own, which is also still part of our country. Sitting opposite are some 60 members coming from that province who are not overly concerned about the problems we are experiencing in Quebec. They feel as if they were here to contend with this government, to stay aloof instead of proving that it is possible to restore a better economic climate in my province, well before the time when separation becomes the prime issue.

I feel as much of a Quebecer as anybody else from that province. I reject as much as anyone else in this House the idea of independence but I think it is most urgent, Mr. Speaker, to prove to Quebecers that by restoring economic progress in our province, it is not necessary to become independent to achieve our legitimate aspirations. But this I do not do in a spirit of partisanship, of political manoeuvring, as my colleagues opposite, and when I say how important it is to help the province of Quebec which is experiencing tremendous difficulties, to bring down the unemployment rate, when I am asking the federal government to cooperate with its Quebec counterpart, there is nothing new in my stand. I did it in the times of Daniel Johnson. I did it in the times of my little cousin Robert Bourassa, and I will do it again today. They accuse us, members of the opposition, of being separatists, because we defend the interests of a province which I call my own: that's the way they are treating us. Well, I want Quebecers to know how these people remain silent during majors debates, how they hide behind scarecrows, or follow too faithfully the instructions of their leaders.