

Although we are not as great linguists as is our leader, I want to assure them that we are very interested and attentive, and we wish we were as proficient in their language as they are in ours.

I would like to do tonight what I would hope the government would do in combating the economic ills that beset this country, that is, get straight to the point. I would like to ask the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), if he were here—I suppose he has Hobson's choice tonight, which is either to go down to the Chateau Laurier and tell the people down there what is wrong, or come to the House of Commons and tell hon. members what is wrong, and perhaps he has taken the easier choice—whether he could reconcile his present fiscal and economic policies with a meaningful and serious commitment to fight regional disparities. That is what concerns me tonight.

Does the Prime Minister have any such policy? Does he have any studies which would indicate the extent to which inflation and high interest rates are impeding regional development projects and exacerbating price inequalities across this nation? If he has, I wish he would bring them forward because this is no imaginary problem, as is illustrated in a recent article prominently displayed in one of the major newspapers in Canada; incidentally, one from a province with which the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion (Mr. Jamieson) is familiar, namely, the province of Newfoundland. The Newfoundland minister of development is quoted as saying that some DREE projects are running between 30 per cent and 40 per cent over what was allocated for them. It is apparent that escalating costs may delay DREE projects, as this article points out. These words can be found, for those who are interested, in the *Evening Telegram*, one of Newfoundland's major newspapers.

Would the Prime Minister, or someone in the government, tell us how much higher the price of food has to go before the Prime Minister will introduce substantial measures to deal with rising food prices, interest rates and economic problems, and what it will take before the right hon. gentleman will appear before the Special Committee on Trends in Food Prices to explain his government's policies? It has been alleged here tonight that there has been no precedent for this. That may be so, but I have the distinct understanding that a previous prime minister, R. B. Bennett, did in fact appear before the finance committee in times past to explain the government's policies to be dealt with by the committee. I would recommend this course of action most heartily to the Prime Minister.

In view of the fact that the price of food items such as bacon varies from \$1.99 in St. John's, Newfoundland, to \$1.29 in Ottawa, can the Minister of Transport (Mr. Marchand) or any of his colleagues tell us if there are any plans to change the present freight rate structure to alleviate the substantial price disparities which are so painful to the outlying parts of Canada, where people are suffering from slow growth problems and a depressed economy?

Will the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion tell the House what efforts he has been making to counter this government's fiscal policies in order to further his own responsibilities to attack regional disparities? Living costs are higher in slow growth areas—this is the cruel paradox—and wages are lower, as the minister should well

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know. If this government is really serious about alleviating regional disparities, why will it not at least consider equal pay for those under the jurisdiction of the Treasury Board across this nation?

Why does the government permit the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Davis) to freeze shipbuilding subsidies? He is freezing the wrong thing, Mr. Speaker, and his action has put men out of work without compensatory measures being taken. This is a direct attack, in most cases, on the slow growth regions of Canada. This action has put hundreds of men out of work without other measures being taken to counter it.

Why has the government not adopted the report of the Standing Committee on Regional Development? That committee, although hamstrung to some extent by being convened late, has functioned reasonably well in a fairly bipartisan manner. One of its recommendations was the creation of a joint task force made up of key personnel from the Department of Regional Economic Expansion and the Department of Transport to address itself to problems of common concern to both these departments, and to co-ordinate and integrate the development of a national transportation policy with that of a policy to alleviate regional disparities. This would make life easier and would make the task of this government easier in combatting the real problems at which it should be looking if it is serious about attacking the inequalities that exist in Canada.

We watched with interest what became of the motion which was moved by myself and seconded by none other than the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion (Mr. Prud'homme). There has been no action. I ask again: When will the government take its responsibilities seriously?

It is interesting to note that the government became aware of the western problems when its position in the west was being further eroded. The hon. member for Crowfoot (Mr. Horner) pointed out shortly after the beginning of the session, in his usual forthright but always kindly fashion, why the government lost the west. Well, they are hardly number one in the east either. If it were not for the program called LIP and the judicious use of the same, this government would have lost more than the east; they would have lost what some columnists say is the Prime Minister's sole salvation—the artful dodger, the President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen), to whom the Prime Minister has given full credit for keeping this vacillating, weary and unimaginative group of cynical opportunists in power. That, Sir, is an awful lot of responsibility for anyone to bear.

**Mr. Turner (Ottawa-Carleton):** Who has the copyright on that?

**Mr. MacKay:** If the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) wants to know, let me tell him that there is no copyright. What it requires is just good common sense, something he could use.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. MacKay:** As I was saying, it is an awful lot of responsibility for anyone to bear, even for the President of