

Employment Programs

along, and will continue to say, that if the government has to choose between full employment and a gradually rising cost of living, or no increase in the cost of living and heavy unemployment, it should opt for full employment. That is what we would have done and that is precisely the policy the government of Canada rejected, basing its policy on the advice it received from the head of the Bank of Canada, the Deputy Minister of Finance and the chairman of the Prices and Incomes Commission. They opted for restraint and we are suffering as a result.

• (8:30 p.m.)

Provincial governments are becoming concerned. A few days ago the Conservative Premier of Ontario, Mr. Robarts, made it clear he was going to consider what programs his government could initiate in order to put people to work in that province. On October 30 the government of Manitoba announced a program to alleviate as much as possible the heavy unemployment expected in that province. It will draw on the \$74 million capital fund placed in its estimates as a reserve against unemployment. It will go ahead as quickly as possible with a program to build schools, improve its university, provide public housing and a host of other projects. It expects to be able to gainfully employ in the neighbourhood of 10 per cent of those expected to be unemployed this winter.

We urge the government of Canada to join with the provinces and not wait for the provinces to come forward with proposals. The government should call a conference. That does not sound very revolutionary and in fact it is not; it is too late to be revolutionary about employment for this winter. The government should call a conference with the provinces at which the larger cities would be represented, to see what programs they have ready and to see what the federal government can do to finance those programs.

It is not good enough to say that we have more people working than ever before. It is not good enough to say that the percentage of unemployment is less than it was. The fact remains that this winter we will have 800,000 people unemployed; we will have a higher unemployment rate than any other industrialized country. That is something of which all Members of Parliament, regardless of party affiliation, ought to be ashamed. I close by urging the government to change its priorities, to make full employment a more urgent objective than the illusory goal for which it has been striving, that of holding the line on rising costs—a goal that can only be achieved and has only been achieved at the expense of the poor people of this country.

[*Translation*]

Mr. J.-A. Mongrain (Trois-Rivières): Mr. Speaker, I spent the whole day listening with the greatest possible attention to the remarks of my hon. colleagues, and I come to the conclusion that though many of their arguments were brilliant, they have said countless useless things. Were businessmen from the various parts of the country—company directors, for instance—to attend our debates, they would be shocked to hear us jabbering

[Mr. Orlikow.]

away for days on end, to solve such matters as that before the House. They would tell us: "Solve the problem, legislate, instead of repeating the same things over and over again."

Naturally, that is part of the procedure and one must submit to it. That is why, in part, I am following the bad example and making a few remarks. I shall try not to repeat what has been said up to this point, Mr. Speaker.

I apologize for the looseness of my remarks but I do not want to repeat what has been said before. For instance, the government has been accused of implementing an unsound economic policy. I question the competence of those who say such things when in all countries, namely the United States, world renowned economists such as President Nixon's advisers, disagree about inflation and hold views diametrically opposed to those of experts as competent as they are. I wonder where my hon. colleagues who blame the government for having followed such or such economic principle in its fight against inflation, have collected their information.

After having read the notice of motion, I was satisfied and convinced that nobody would object to it. Since it justifies the action taken by the government months ago, why spend a whole day on it?

A whole series of measures are already in force. We could have devoted this day to pass some of them in order to speed up our business, but obviously this is part of the political tactics of the opposition. I noticed that some of my colleagues opposite whose sincerity is apparent at times were reluctant to make certain bold statements.

As for me, I will simply point out what has been done in my area. Incidentally, I thank my friends opposite for showing a special concern for the province of Quebec in their notice of motion. It was time Parliament saw to it. In the last 100 years, there has been no excess of sympathy in this house for Quebec. On behalf of my province, I therefore wish to thank the mover for his thought which will certainly do no harm.

From 1968 to 1969 in my riding, the federal government paid \$845,732 to retrain the unemployed. It is obvious that this is a worthwhile effort. Then during the same period, it granted the unemployed \$995,800 in living allowances. Furthermore, from 1969 to 1970 allowances were granted to 1,260 people to help them retrain, improve their education, teach them new trades so as to enable them to earn a living. And the federal government spent the amount of \$1,080,000 in my riding with a population of 150,000 distributed over three municipalities. I refer to my riding, but I imagine that the same thing applies in most other constituencies of the province.

In 1969-70, the federal government spent \$12,058,000 for the building of technical schools or CEGEPs. In my view, that is an effort to reduce unemployment.

My colleague spoke a moment ago about the policy concerning the textile industry. That new policy has been of help to us because we have in our province an important industry, called Wabasso Cotton, which is nationally known. The new policy has not yet produced all the results we expected of it.