

Taxation

profits. This is displacing oil which is now shut in in the Lloydminster area and in some of the fields in Alberta.

Taxpayers across Canada are paying 4 cents to 5 cents per gallon at the pump, which goes into a fund to subsidize offshore oil. We have a two-tier system in Canada which was tried and abandoned in the United States because it did harm to the United States economy. We always learn from the United States ten years later. We are shutting down wells in western Canada.

Recently I returned from my riding where I learned that there has been a 1,300 per cent increase in unemployment in the oil industry. Roughnecks who worked on oil rigs, in the derrick, on the floor and in the pit are now lining up at welfare offices because they have run out of unemployment insurance benefits. I invite hon. members opposite to come with me to Grande Prairie to visit the welfare offices and watch these once proud and fine men line up and say they need welfare because they do not have jobs. This is because of the national energy policy of the government. They should come with me to visit Bonnyville and Grand Centre to look at the number of young people who are lining up at the welfare offices. These young people saved up their money in order to start small businesses. They thought that Canada was a place of opportunity and that they would build plants because Canada needed oil. We still need oil. Hon. members opposite should come with me to talk with some of these people. I wish they could answer my telephone calls and hear what they have to say. They do not understand. We have the natural resources, the trained people and the technology. All we lack is the will of government to make the country self-sufficient.

I wish hon. members opposite could come with me to talk with a farmer in Athabasca who told me last week that he took his pride herd to slaughter. He will not even maintain his herd; he took it to slaughter. Unfortunately the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) has left the House. I was hoping that he would have heard that comment.

I wish hon. members opposite could have spoken with another chap in Newbrook who telephoned me and said: "What the hell is the use; I will not even bother planting a crop this year". He broke the land with his own hands and farmed in the community for the last 40 years, and now he asks "What the hell is the use?"

This is the type of despair the government is causing with its taxes, the National Energy Program and its budget. It has created a feeling of total despair across the country. People are asking what will happen. I will tell them what will happen. It will continue and get worse, until the government admits to Canadians that it made mistakes with the National Energy Program and with the budget. It should do the honourable thing—it should reverse many of the ill-conceived ideas pushed by socialistic bureaucrats in government departments.

Where is the backbone of hon. members opposite? Where is the backbone of the hon. member for Scarborough Centre (Mr. Kelly)? He should rise and tell his caucus colleagues that he will not stand for it any longer. He knows as well as I that

policies of government in the National Energy Program and in the budget are killing the economy of the country.

• (1750)

The hon. member for Charlesbourg (Mr. Bussi eres) is busy talking but perhaps he will read my speech. When will he stand up and tell the members of his caucus, the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and the Minister of Finance that enough is enough and that they are killing the initiative of Canadians? While the government is killing the economy of this country, it is destroying our initiative. Unemployed people all across Canada are sick with fear because they do not know what their future will be.

Can you imagine the government introducing a 20-year bond issue at 15½ per cent while the Minister of Finance at the same time repeats in the House every day that the government will fight inflation with its high interest rate policy. Although the high interest rate policy is there because of high inflation, the minister says they will beat it. Yet the government issues a 20-year bond issue at 15½ per cent! Members of the Liberal government must think Canadians are stupid if the government issues a 20-year bond at 15½ per cent while saying at the same time that inflation will come down. That irresponsible action will guarantee to the rest of the world that Canada is expecting double digit inflation for at least two decades; otherwise the government would not have issued those bonds.

I invite Liberal members to visit people in senior citizen homes. I wonder if they ever talk to senior citizens in their ridings. The hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie (Mr. Irwin) should talk to them and find out what has happened to their purchasing power. Just watch the tears running down an old lady's cheek because she cannot afford to buy her son and daughter-in-law a wedding present.

Mr. Irwin: It is all indexed.

Mr. Shields: We know that the hon. member's salary is indexed. He does not have to worry. I invite him to visit the fishermen in my area. He might be surprised that I am talking about fishermen but we have a freshwater fishing industry in northeastern Alberta. Ask those fishermen what is happening to them. The government has introduced a proposal whereby it will now withhold their taxes. These fishermen are also small businessmen. They buy trucks and nets and fish through the ice in the winter. Like other small businessmen, they sell their produce in the marketplace. Incidentally, the government also controls the market.

Prior to this budget, those fishermen were treated like any other small businessmen. They did their taxes at the end of the year; they deducted all their expenses and submitted their tax. However, what has happened now is that the finance minister, in his wisdom, has said that the fishermen cannot do that any more. The government will now withhold taxes at the wholesale level where the fisherman sells his fish. This irresponsible, terrible and sick government is now attacking small fishermen in northeastern Alberta and using their money for the full year