

The Budget—Mr. Godin

The Canadian people are justified in distrusting a government which, at a time when all kinds of goods are plentiful, allow so many people to live in destitution.

Mr. Speaker, one may wonder whether the Progressive Conservatives could do better. Have they found practical ways to cope with the unemployment problem? What were their solutions when they were in office from 1958 to 1962? Do they have better answers to offer now and what concrete measures do they suggest?

We of the Social Credit Party of Canada would like it very much if the Progressive Conservatives could suggest solutions likely to solve the unemployment problem. We would like to be able to endorse all their criticisms about the present situation and we would like very much to see another government at the head of the country.

Unfortunately, the Progressive Conservatives who offer themselves as alternative solutions to the Liberals have no credibility when it comes to fighting against unemployment. They have no credibility and they will not have the chance, I think, to replace the present government because electors aware that the Progressive Conservatives have no solution to offer to settle the unemployment issue. They have shown their inefficacy and their ineffectiveness when they were in power in Canada from 1958 to 1962.

In September 1971, Statistics Canada published a most interesting and revealing study on the unemployment problem in Canada. Entitled "Unemployment Data, 1960-71" this study enables us to analyse the unemployment situation in the course of the years 1960, 1965 and 1970.

Here are the yearly average unemployment rates in relation to the total manpower for each of the five Canadian areas. For the Atlantic region, in 1970, the unemployment rate amounted to 7.6 per cent in relation to the total manpower; in 1965, it was 7.4 per cent, and in 1960, under the Progressive Conservative government, the unemployment rate reached 10.7 per cent.

For the Quebec region, in 1970, the rate of unemployment stood at 7.9 per cent; in 1965, 5.4 per cent, and in 1960, 9.1 per cent, which means that in Quebec also, the rate of unemployment was higher under the Progressive Conservative regime of the sixties.

In Ontario, we note the same occurrence: the unemployment rate was 4.3 per cent in 1970 and 5.4 per cent in 1960.

In the Prairies, unemployment reached 4.4 per cent in 1970 and 4.2 per cent in 1960.

Lastly, in British Columbia, the unemployment rate was 7.6 per cent in 1970 and 8.5 per cent in 1960, under the Progressive Conservative government.

I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that with such a record and so poor a performance in respect of unemployment, the Progressive Conservatives have nothing to teach anyone and they should be the least inclined to criticize the present government which has not been and is not able to check unemployment.

According to statistical data from January 1953 to December 1971, here is the unemployment situation from 1959 to 1962, under the Progressive Conservative government, and from 1968 to 1971, under the Liberal government.

In 1959, the unemployment rate, by sex and age categories, was 6 per cent. It rose to 7 per cent in 1960. It reached 7.1 per cent in 1961, decreasing to 5.9 per cent in 1962, when the Progressive Conservative party was in office.

In 1968, under the government of the present right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), the unemployment rate was 4.8 per cent; it fell to 4.7 per cent in 1969 and again went up to 5.9 per cent in 1970, reaching 6.4 per cent in 1971.

On pages 12 and 141 of Catalogue 71-201 showing unemployment and labour figures from January 1953 to December 1971, there is clear evidence that the unemployment rate, from 1958 to 1962, under a Progressive Conservative government, reached absolute figures higher than those registered under this government from 1968 to 1971.

Mr. Speaker, I would not take the time of the House to quote all the figures available to me, but may I say only that in 1961 the labour force had 2 million fewer workers than in 1971. The unemployment figure reached 716,000 in February 1961 and 702,000 in March 1961.

Under this government, the unemployment figure never exceeded 700,000, although in Canada the labour force has increased by two million workers.

Therefore, the unemployment rate stood at 11.4 per cent in March 1961, 11.24 per cent in February 1961 and 10.77 per cent in January 1961.

An analysis of these statistical data enlightens us on how the Progressive Conservative party members felt about the problem of unemployment when they occupied the front benches. I therefore cannot bring myself to place confidence in the Progressive Conservatives when they are dealing with this problem because they did worse than the present government when they were in power.

It is true that the Progressive Conservatives have changed their leader since 1962 but I believe, that the party's past record has not been impressive. We even have some documents to the effect that the present leader (Mr. Stanfield) has never been very popular. The people of Canada cannot even grant him the benefit of the doubt, saying "Let us give him a chance to prove himself, since he has already been tested as premier of Nova Scotia".

As a matter of fact, in issue No. 39, for March 21, 1967, of the proceedings of the Joint Senate and Commons Committee on Consumer Credit, we find a brief submitted by Mr. Duncan MacIntyre, who represented a department of St. Francis Xavier University as well as low-income families of the eastern ridings of the province. Now, the author of this brief states that only three constituencies in the province had less than 40 per cent poor families. In fact, in some constituencies, 59, 56, and even 63 per cent of families were poor.

If one uses the same criteria as were used in writing the brief, one can say the Mr. MacIntyre was perfectly right, since the families he refers to were, and I quote:

(1) families other than agricultural families, with incomes under \$3,000;

(2) agricultural families with incomes under \$2,500;