

*Employment Programs*

He said: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson) was not in the House when the motion was read. I had hoped he might come back, although I think he has gone for a smoke behind the curtains—

**An hon. Member:** May he burn.

**Mr. Stanfield:** And he disappeared in a cloud of smoke.

**Mr. Comeau:** Any government that is so insensitive to the economic needs of Canadians should follow the normal course, that is shrug its shoulders and resign so that others may bring help to this country. For the past three years we have given this government a chance, we have tried to make suggestions to them. However, the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), the Minister of Finance and their colleagues have blindly stumbled on bringing more unemployment and more inflation to the economy of Canada, thus bringing the country to the brink of ruin.

**An hon. Member:** Shame.

**Mr. Comeau:** As has been stated before, the economic policies of this government are inhumane, inefficient and completely incomprehensible to a small backbencher like me.

*[Translation]*

Mr. Speaker, today's motion draws attention to this problem in a rather formal way. I am deeply concerned about the fact that thousands of Canadians are unable to find jobs.

According to the April statistics—the most recent available to us—more than 280,000 young people were looking for work, this total represents 42.3 per cent of all the unemployed.

Even if, by themselves, those statistics appear alarming, the situation is worse still, because they do not take into account, for instance, the students and family heads, aged 25 or over, who wish to provide for their families.

*[English]*

The economic problems of this country related to employment bear repetition. This is why I have no hesitation at all in moving the type of motion that I have today. Maybe the government will realize the situation and give some humble consideration to the unemployed when it presents its budget on June 18.

• (3:10 p.m.)

Right now let me warn those Liberal backbenchers who will participate in this debate, who will be looking for plums within their own party and who will tell me that, even though I am the mover of this motion, I have made no suggestions to correct the problem, that I am quite humble in my approach. I do not have the capability to present proper suggestions for the government to follow simply because I do not have behind me all the public servants upon whom the government can rely to propose the type of suggestions that should be proposed. With the thousands of public servants that it has at its disposal, I suggest the government should have been able to do something about the problem by now.

**[Mr. Comeau.]**

**An hon. Member:** What about your research staff?

**Mr. Comeau:** Somebody asks about our research staff. I point out that Liberal members also have a research staff, but I suggest that if Liberal backbenchers do not start speaking out on the needs of the country, then after the next election they, too, will find themselves unemployed.

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

**Mr. Comeau:** The leader of my party—

**An hon. Member:** Where is he?

**Mr. Comeau:** Where is the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau)? Oh, I see him here. I am glad he is here. But where is the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson)? Where is that great philosopher? The leader of my party—

**Mr. Mahoney:** Where is he, anyway?

**Mr. Comeau:** I hear the hon. member for Calgary South (Mr. Mahoney) yapping again. He is one of those who is suggesting to the Minister of Finance the kind of policy that we are following. We are in complete chaos because of the suggestions that the hon. member sometimes makes.

Members of my party have made suggestions that the government should establish full employment programs, but the fact is that nobody in the government listens. It is my job to point out the difficulties faced by Canadians and it is the job of the government, not mine, to govern the country accordingly.

**An hon. Member:** The Prime Minister is leaving.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Comeau:** Mr. Speaker, I hope he will come back.

*[English]*

Oh yes, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance will speak later in the debate, and I am sure the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Pepin) will participate. The Minister of Finance will say, "Look, my suggestions will come before you on June 18." He will tell the country on that day how he is going to save it from the current economic crisis. But the thing that bothers me most is that the government absolutely does not want to listen to anyone. Prime Ministerial word games have replaced serious discussions about unemployment. The Minister of Finance represents nothing more than the king in his counting house counting out his money, while he tells the peasants to live on \$30 a week.

There is one fact that needs to be stated time and time again. It is that Canada needs full employment and a budget which will restore a healthy growth to our economy. Without economic growth, we will not be able to provide jobs for our young people, for the university graduates who are coming into the labour force. What has the government offered in the past three years to expand the economy? It made some money available. Forty-two cents have been given to our old age pensioners, the equivalent of seven postage stamps now but soon