

*Canadian Economy*

makes no bones about this third option which is becoming essential between the status quo, the centralizing approach we have on this side in Ottawa, and the proposal put forward by Quebec. It seems obvious that we must choose between those two extremes. So in the hearings it is holding throughout Canada, the Pepin-Robarts Commission feels the need to mention the decentralization of some powers or some jurisdictions to interest the provinces, have them participate in the setting up of a major policy for the future, a long term policy. Provinces of course have resented being left aside.

And some were wondering earlier why they are talking about a referendum in Quebec. We might wonder why Quebecers feel they should ask that question again. There are reasons to that; it could as well be because of the lack of measures. My hon. friends opposite will no doubt recognize that during the last provincial election in Quebec, the mismanagement, poor planning and lack of security in the dairy industry have cost the provincial Liberal party a countless number of rural ridings.

Yet that had nothing to do with the provincial government. It was a federal policy which was going to cost dearly to the Liberals. I recall hearing some provincial Liberals mention that that policy was going to cost them dearly, be it in the textile or the shoe industry. Layoffs did not start to decrease right after November 15, Mr. Speaker. In the mining industry, as was mentioned recently it's the same. So, Mr. Speaker, that situation irked the people in Quebec very much, so that they are asking themselves again: Can the federal government help us? Can it give us a good place in which to live in this country? I would like to answer: Why, sure! It is not too late yet, but with some changes and an entirely new flexibility within the federalist system.

I think that if the federal government really wants to do something in that direction, Mr. Speaker, they should stop saying in this House that the Quebec government is making fun of the federal government. They should be above that. Of course, the federal government has been and will always be at loggerheads with the provincial governments, but this is nothing new. One only has to go back to the Duplessis era, or recall the battles fought under the administration of Messrs. Johnson, Bertrand, Bourassa, Lesage. So this is nothing new.

Besides, the first ministers of other provinces have been very critical of the federal government's performance. This is a further reason, Mr. Speaker, to hope that the government will bring together not only the provinces but also the unions and the businessmen so that they may all seek answers to our economic problems. To be sure, the government alone cannot find those answers and cannot devise those measures. On that basis, I dare hope that our impartial representations will be considered, and I also hope that the government will seek the required talents in every economic sector to develop long-term policies and give back to the Canadian people the jobs which will restore their dignity. I hope so for our young people as well as for those who are not so young.

Mr. Speaker, I almost forgot to mention that sometimes we are told that we have no solutions to offer. I think that with

[Mr. La Salle.]

one million unemployed, it would be very interesting to consider the possibility of allowing people of 60 to get the old age security pension without making it compulsory. We would enable at the same time younger people to enter the labour market and those who need a well deserved rest to withdraw from the labour market and be replaced by the young people who are going to the bad through lack of job opportunities. I am not saying that the government has not made any efforts, but I repeat that such efforts have been entirely inadequate. Therefore we urge the government to respond in accordance with our requirements.

**Mr. Léonel Beaudoin (Richmond):** Mr. Speaker, I readily support the motion introduced today by the hon. member for Rimouski (Mr. Allard) on behalf of the Social Credit Party of Canada.

I support it with eagerness because, at the risk of repeating myself, the economic situation is disastrous. Why? I feel that both opposition and government members know the answer. I feel it in a very obvious way. It is worse than an economic tragedy, unemployment is a social disaster. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Chrétien) can say as often as he likes that the economic situation is not desperate, he minimizes the facts of life. What kind of government have we at the present time? A government that uses the constitutional issue as its stock argument.

● (1742)

We see from time to time the minister pointing his finger at the wicked Quebecers. The hon. minister says that our situation is not desperate, that is what he said no later than last Saturday, during an oyster dinner arranged by the Liberal Association of the Hull district, not "dull" district. According to the Ottawa newspaper *Le Droit* on November 21 1977, the minister said, I quote:

Our situation is not yet desperate.

I truly hope it is not desperate but maybe it is time to start thinking about it. And the minister goes on saying that he had been to Israel and that, according to him, in the mind of the Israelis:

Canada was really the Promised Land.

I would like to remind the minister that Israel is still at war in spite of President Sadat's visit. I would say, Mr. Speaker, that here in Canada, in a totally different context, the situation is nearly as desperate as in that part of the world, maybe not in the same way, but for some people who have been unemployed for a year now the situation seems as hopeless as in those countries. While some people are eating oysters, thousands of workers lose their jobs in the footwear textile, clothing and furniture industries. If the minister could at least send his oysters to the unemployed, this would enable them to eat their fill and care for themselves a little.

Unfortunately, the government is too busy with those who took power in Quebec, it is too busy with the official opposition which is after the RCMP. All this witch hunt is ridiculous and it does not solve in any way our economic problems. The