

● (1050)

I want to describe the economic impact of some of these measures on people I know. One of these people is an average Canadian who operates a grocery business. It is a small rural store. He has operated it all his life. He serves a clientele which has little access to neighbourhood grocery services but does have access to a large shopping centre. In the last few years he has been under a terrific cost squeeze. First of all, the dairy no longer delivers milk to his store. The dairy makes the grocery storekeeper go up the road to pick it up because the dairy cannot afford the expense of delivering it to him. The same is the case with the bakery. The bakery no longer will deliver bread to his small grocery store because it is trying to save on costs.

His manufacturers and suppliers demand cash for his inventory items because they will not extend credit to him in the tough times they are facing. His insurance costs have gone up, and his utility costs have gone up. He finds it difficult to meet his payroll. His inventory is low. He cannot restock at the interest rates he is charged. His mark-up is already above that of his large store competitors, and he cannot increase prices.

This storekeeper does not, of course, qualify for the prime rate at 18.25 per cent. The effect of the interest rate he is charged is more than he can bear, so what he does is simply lock his door. He just shuts down and gives up. That is the economic impact of the government's policies on some Canadians.

Another Canadian I know who is suffering under these economic policies runs a trucking operation in Alberta. He is a supplier for the oil patch. He built his business himself. He built his first rig with his own hands on a frame he found in a junk yard. He built this truck right down to the carpet on the floor. Then he went out and built another one, sinking all the dollars he earned into expanding his capacity. His wife did his books and kept the telex in her kitchen. For years she and the family did without so that he could build up his business.

In many ways this trucking operator personifies everything western alienation is about, because what he wanted to do was build a future for himself and his family. He did it under the toughest conditions one could imagine. For instance, he used to go into the high Arctic in February at the very first early light. He would go north when there were 15 minutes of light and unload a Cat from the Bristol. With the Cat he would build an airstrip and the drilling pads for oil rigs. He built containers for his suppliers. Under the impact of the energy policy which has been introduced by the government he is facing disastrous conditions because when the rigs move south the best iron moves first, and there is no need for support services. There is little industry to take up the slack, but at bank rates at 1 per cent over prime he just cannot afford to continue. That is what economic impact means to the average Canadian.

Another Canadian I know is a senior citizen in Vancouver who worked all her life for this country. She put aside her savings for her senior years. She is facing an economy in which all her costs are up. Her rent is up. Her transit costs are up,

and her car insurance has increased by a third this year. Her discretionary income is lower because her income is fixed. I find it amazing that the Minister of Finance will maintain that senior citizens and other people in this country who require some support are fully protected from his policies because, of course, every senior citizen knows that that is not true.

When this senior citizen to whom I refer looks at her shrinking food dollar, she does not have to be told that the food index is 13.7 per cent higher than last year. She knows this by the reduction in the amount of food she can afford to buy. She hears the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) tell her to use common sense. Her common sense tells her that if she has no money, she cannot afford food, so she exists on an egg or some cheese or some bread pudding. The Prime Minister calls this common sense. We call it cruelty.

I know another young couple who are suffering from the impact of these policies. They want to buy a home. They are the pride of their generation. They have earned their education. They are well motivated. They have good jobs. They have a family income of about \$40,000 a year. They are in good health and, in line with their Canadian tradition, they have saved their money and postponed having their family so that they can buy a home. They find themselves frustrated on two counts. The inflated house prices are beyond their reach. Their \$20,000 down payment in Vancouver will buy them a one-bedroom condominium, if they are lucky. In order to buy a three-bedroom home in Vancouver it will cost them upwards of \$200,000. They cannot conceive of a time when they can afford to buy that home. If they could, they would face mortgage interest rates which are beyond anyone's comprehension. The monthly payments involved with the current mortgage rates are far beyond their capacity to pay, and these are fully employed, educated, and motivated Canadians. They have a sense of despair because they have done everything right, and everything has turned out wrong.

I know another Canadian who lives in central Canada who, every day when he gets up and goes to work, is in fear of losing his job. He knows that his job and the whole livelihood of his family depend on his ability to earn a paycheque, and that paycheque is in doubt. Every day when he drives to work he is worried about getting the slip which says that his business is shutting down. He lives in constant fear and anxiety. That is what economic impact means to the average Canadian.

What these people share is a sense of personal, and humiliating failure. They have tried their best, and they are going nowhere, and they share a frustration so deep that it is beyond description. However, I suggest that the failure is not theirs, because this government has failed them. This government in particular has failed them by creating the economic conditions which have led to their despair.

To this the Minister of Finance says he is doing all he can. We believe him. It may be that he is doing all he can and that the present crisis is beyond his personal capacity to meet. If that is the case, he should resign. He claims that the economic wasteland we are in is directly the fault of world events and directly the fault of the U.S. in particular. We have to