

in short their potential at the service of all their fellow-citizens.

And this, Mr. Speaker, can be done. This is no utopia, this is no dream; it is merely coming back to a sound economic policy, an economic policy of pure common sense. And we shall settle these problems of full employment and unemployment only when one and all will finally be able to contribute to the production of what this country needs, because it is perfectly ridiculous to accept blindly the principle that if we cannot produce at a lower cost than the United States, Europe or other countries of the world, we should not produce at all but buy from these countries.

If we were to follow this theory to its logical conclusion, Mr. Speaker, we would end up living on U.S. welfare for we all know that it is difficult to keep up with U.S. productivity in many areas of industrial activity, even if we take only prices into account. Thus, if automobiles are less expensive in the U.S., let us stop building them here and buy them across the border instead.

If textile products are less expensive in Japan or in Europe, let us close down all our factories and import these goods!

If a pound of butter is cheaper in New Zealand, we should penalize our own producers and buy the cheaper butter down under.

With this sort of reasoning, Mr. Speaker, Canada would stop producing anything in a few years. It is a nefarious theory and prices are only relative. What counts is the product we can get for the money we have.

The absolute value of money does not mean but its relative value does since we can buy goods with it. That is why a sound economy must return to sound basic principles, principles that are logical. And those are that money should serve all the citizens, the whole society.

When unemployment reaches frightening proportions, and we are stuck with it, it should not be tolerated, all the more so when we realize that we import a significant amount of our consumer goods. If Canadians made those products, part of our unemployment problem would be solved. But when our policy is based exclusively on ups and downs, on the mathematical acrobatics of the relative value of the American dollar, the Canadian dollar, the French franc or the German mark, in short, when we are concerned about exchange rates before caring about the possibilities and the production potential of this country, that is when we talk about inflation, unemployment, and come to incomprehensible economic dilemmas, knowing all along that Canada does not lack anything.

Mr. Speaker, of course there are solutions; there will come a time when it will perhaps be less necessary to find them than to accept them—since some have already been suggested—and we will support without reservation any measure which would help our citizens, which would spark their spirit of initiative, which would help all those who can to improve the production and which would at the same time help the consumer buy that production through increased purchasing power. That is the solution, Mr. Speaker—

Employment Programs

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Order. I regret that I must interrupt the hon. member, but his time has expired.

Mr. Matte: One minute more and I could be through, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel): Does the House agree to let the hon. member finish his comments?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Matte: I thank my hon. colleagues, Mr. Speaker.

I would like to add, in concluding, and this will only take a few seconds, that the famous unemployment and full employment problem is serious especially when we note that our young people are particularly affected. The problem becomes urgent and cries for a solution when we find that thousands of young people enter the labour market not only for the summer months but also after they graduate and that they cannot find any work. If this trend continues Mr. Speaker, catastrophe will obviously follow, because the 20-, 21-, or 25-year-old will no longer accept to be patient and he will not admit that his country's government can lead him to such a dead-end. He will not admit either that, with his initiative, with the potential existing in this country, he can be unemployed.

[English]

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the resolution which has been put down for debate today deals with the problem of unemployment among our youth in particular, and suggests the failure in some ways of the government to deal, with this problem as well as some repudiation of responsibility by the government in connection with this problem. I should like to note, first of all, that while the resolution deals with unemployment among our youth, a great deal of the time of the members was spent on the economic situation generally and unemployment generally, and was not essentially related to the resolution. This, of course, was a consistent performance on the part of members opposite in this House who have chosen once again, each in his own way, to express their gloom and doom views concerning the state of the Canadian economy and where it is going.

I understand why they wanted at this time to put down this resolution once more. It is of course, only a short number of days before the budget will be presented, a time when the government can more fully indicate its assessment and its prediction about the economy of Canada as well as its view about what should be done at this time consistent with that assessment and prediction. This is probably also the last opportunity the opposition will have to take a kick at that particular cat because of the increase in employment in this country which is taking place in the current days and which will be revealed when the next figures are released. At that time they will turn their attention to other issues or different aspects of this issue. This same group, of course, not many months ago, treated inflation as the single most serious problem facing the government and, indeed, the government itself agreed.