

Employment Incentive Programs

today are unemployed. That figure, I suspect, is closer to the truth than the 600,000 figure.

This government embarked on a policy that no other Canadian government has ever embarked upon. It has used taxpayer money to buy people off the unemployment rolls. That is what it has done—it has bought people off the unemployment rolls. You can say to the government you are mobile and willing to move from A to B, and you will be eligible for an incentive grant because the government wants to take you off the unemployment rolls. It does not matter if the project is productive, if it will add to the gross national product. The government is interested in one thing only, its public record just before an election.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Danforth: The people of Canada know this. That is why we are debating the matter. Certainly, the opposition is not always right; but it is not always wrong, either.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Danforth: We resent the attitude of this arrogant government which says that everything it does is right and not open to challenge. It is because of the government's attitude that we are in our present trouble. It will not accept the simple truth that it may be wrong and that not all its policies are correct.

Government members say the people of Canada never had it so good. I suggest, instead, that never before have they been so uneasy and unsure of their future. The minister said that the people in Canada are spending more money than ever on consumer goods. We know why. In view of the government's tax policies, it does not pay to save. The more you save, the more the government will take of your savings. It is small wonder the people are saying, "We may as well live today, because we will be persecuted tomorrow."

Mr. Hugh James Faulkner (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's contribution was a remarkable contribution, although I am not sure to what. Certainly, it was indicative of the style we may expect the hon. member to use time after time in his campaign; however, I remind him that this is the House of Commons and we are debating a specific motion. Perhaps he followed the questionable example shown by the hon. member for Prince Edward-Hastings (Mr. Hees) who showed, I suppose, some sort of political acumen in avoiding the whole question.

The motion is specific. It says that the government's incentive programs have failed.

Mr. Danforth: They have.

Mr. Hees: Hear, hear!

Mr. Faulkner: That, of course, is the characteristic position of the opposition. Its record is one of complaints and criticisms, indicting the government, without respite, from the very beginning for everything it has done. I suggest to the opposition that, for the sake of its own credibility, it might say once in four years that the government may have done something right.

[Mr. Danforth.]

The opposition again today brought forward one of those negative indictments of the government and government programs. I was interested to note how carefully hon. members opposite avoided dealing with incentive programs, the subject we are debating. I happen to represent an industrial constituency. A number of major plants are to be found in Peterborough, including those owned and run by Canadian General Electric, Outboard Marine and De Laval, Fisher Gauge and many others. I have argued strenuously for more incentive type programs. I have argued that way since first arriving here in 1965 and still remember the discussions that took place in committee at that time. We said the government should support the secondary manufacturing sector. That is what the government has done, and done reasonably effectively. No one on this side of the House, as the hon. member for Kent-Essex (Mr. Danforth) tried to intimate, says that every one of these programs is perfect or could not be improved. I repeat, no one on this side says that; so, let us dismiss that nonsense and save it for the hustings and campaign platforms because, certainly, it is nonsense. There is no place for such nonsense in the House of Commons.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Danforth: The hon. member did not listen to the minister.

Mr. Faulkner: During the past four years this government, with incentive programs, has tried to help the secondary manufacturing sector of the economy become more efficient and compete more effectively in order that it may make inroads in export markets and provide the level of employment that we want for Canadians. If the opposition is arguing that these programs have failed, it is incumbent upon them to show where they have failed. Which programs are they talking about? Which programs did the hon. member who moved this motion mention? Not one. It was one of those airy, vague, fuzzy, confused speeches intended for the hustings.

• (1730)

What does the opposition think about some of these programs? What, for instance, does it think about the Adjustment Assistance Program? Is this a program we should scrap, or should it be revised? And if so, in what way? What about the BEAM program? I can remember when this was introduced by the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Drury). It was applauded by the opposition. There was no mention of that this afternoon, no word about any way in which it might be improved.

What about the program providing for the remission of duty on new machinery coming into the country to support Canadian manufacturers? Is this a program which should be scrapped, or should it be revised? Not a word, not a suggestion, and no advice from the opposition. What do they think about programs to increase productivity? That is an incentive program, a program developed by the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce. Is that a program which should be scrapped or changed? Again, not a word.

It does seem to me as one member who represents an important industrial sector of the economy, as a member