

Anti-Inflation Program

DREE have been. But from the speeches he has made in this House and elsewhere I have concluded he is not even close to understanding the real problem of regional development, though I hope he will learn.

He tells the House that he would have a national development program. I will wait and see what answers he will have regarding regional development. The point I want to make is that this anti-inflation program hits the powerful in society. That is obvious. Anyone who reads the white paper would realize what this attack on inflation does. The motion says that it is completely unfair to wage and salary earners. Yes, it will be unfair to some wage and salary earners. It will be unfair to wage and salary earners who are members of a big union, and whose big union has been wielding economic power in the last few years.

I do not bitch about that, Madam Speaker. There is nothing wrong in a free society with people trying to obtain economic power. When the leader of the NDP talks about the program being unfair to wage and salary earners in Canada, he is right. It is unfair to those who are represented by economic power groups that are bargaining in society for a bigger share of the national income.

As for the wage and salary earners who are unorganized, who are not members of a big powerful union—and there are less of those in the constituency of Oshawa-Whitby than in the maritimes, for example—if the situation had been left as it was without controls there is no way the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby, or any other member, could convince me that these wage and salary earners would have caught up. The leader of the NDP knows that. The UAW and other big unions would have got better settlements from their employers. So would CUPW and CUPE.

Mr. Broadbent: The unorganized will get nothing from this program.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Guay (St. Boniface): Remember this is your opposition day.

Mr. Breau: The leader of the NDP should really not get so upset, because on some matters I do not disagree so strongly with the NDP. I do not disagree with them when they talk about redistributing income. But when that party tries to exploit the situation by saying that because the program deals with the economically powerful in society, the powerful unions, it will hurt all wage and salary earners, this is just not true.

What I should like the leader of the NDP to tell me, in the context of this program or any program that attacks inflation, is how he will—

Mr. Broadbent: I would tax the corporations, that is how.

Mr. Breau: The hon. member should know that I am further from the corporations than he is. In New Brunswick, when one buys a car it does not matter who exploits the buyer on the price of the car; whether GM or the UAW, it is still exploitation.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Breau: When the members of the NDP, with whom I sometimes agree, start talking about how this program will hurt the low income wage and salary earners—when in fact it will hurt the powerful unions in society—I just do not follow the argument. What I should like the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby to tell me is how he would devise a program of controls in the context of the kind of program we have today. He is an economist and he knows the problem. How would he give more to the low income wage earner?

Mr. Broadbent: Ask Lalonde what he was trying to get through to the cabinet.

Mr. Breau: I would expect the leader of the NDP to tell me what he would do. Perhaps he will learn to be a true leader and not heckle a poor backbencher like me. I should like to try to find a way to help people on low income in times of inflation, and that is the reason I am in politics. I should like to have a better distribution of wealth in society, in my particular region, all over the country, and even all over the world.

While I have nothing against the fact that in a free society one should be able to bargain to get more, and while you have checks and balances in bargaining, threatening, saying you will go on strike and so on, there are a lot of people in this country who cannot do this. The leader of the NDP says that if we let the labour movement get what it wants this will somehow benefit the low income wage earner. He is an economist and is experienced in politics, but this argument does not make sense to me at all. It is all very fine to let certain groups attain power; but if they use it in a way that raises the price of products so that people in some sectors of the country cannot afford to buy them, it is not helping these people at all.

Therefore I agree that the anti-inflation program will possibly hurt people of low income; but without the program of controls those people would have stayed where they were. The big settlements would have gone to the big unions, and the hon. member knows that. The fish cutting workers in my constituency, the lumbermen in the saw-mills—

Mr. Broadbent: You are sounding more like Mackasey every day.

● (1630)

Mr. Breau: I am glad the hon. member admits I am making sense. The Leader of the NDP says I sound like the Postmaster General (Mr. Mackasey), who I think will go down in history as a great Canadian.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Breau: I was saying that the lumbermen, the pulpwood cutters, and fish cutters in my constituency would not have obtained a bigger settlement if this program had not been in existence. Those workers would have received the same settlement they are now allowed. If a situation should develop in which that is not the case I will be the first one to agree with the leader of the NDP that the program is unworkable. However, just because it hits the UAW, CUPW, and other big unions in Canada I am not