

### *Alleged Non-Support of Employment Programs*

The vast majority of the 47 respondents to this question offered more than one suggestion for alleviating the current situation. The suggestions are divided into short-term (immediate) and longer-term measures.

By far the most popular measure advocated (mentioned by approximately 45 per cent of the respondents) was the immediate introduction by either the federal or provincial governments of a winter works program similar to the program which existed in the 1960s. Also of a short-term nature is the suggestion that there be an immediate increase in the level of unemployment insurance benefits.

Let me pose a few questions with respect to that last statement, Mr. Speaker. I am at a loss to understand why the government has not attempted to provide some relief under the Unemployment Insurance Act at this time. Surely there should be easier access to benefits and they should be increased. Is it necessary to wait until April, 1971? We continually hear members on the government benches stating that they are working on it and will be bringing it in shortly, but they want to bring in the whole act. This attitude is irresponsible because at present there are many people whose benefits have run out, and unless there is an extension of seasonal benefits it appears to me that the government is asking people to go on the welfare rolls. That is greasing the skids of economic chaos, Mr. Speaker.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Alexander:** It shows an irresponsible approach to a very serious problem.

**An hon. Member:** There are only eight government members present.

**Mr. Alexander:** I am very concerned about what unemployment means, Mr. Speaker. The following has been stated by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development:

Long-term unemployment signifies lost productivity and life wasted, both national and individual misfortune.

In 1970, the annual average number of persons experiencing unemployment for four months and longer was 164,000. This is higher than every other year in the preceding decade except 1961. The Liberal government, with its rhetoric about participatory democracy, has distributed unemployment impartially among all classes in our society. But there is little doubt that the poor suffer most. Close to 100,000 of the approximately 500,000 unemployed Canadians in the third quarter of 1970 are listed as people who have never had a full-time civilian job lasting two weeks or more. Unskilled labourers, semi-skilled craftsmen and production workers, farm and mine workers, account for almost half of all Canadians without jobs.

When Ottawa puts price stability at a higher priority level than high unemployment, the poor are trapped between fewer job opportunities on the one hand and rising taxes and restricted credit on the other. While some of the poor may be seriously hurt by inflation, more of them are hurt by high unemployment. I do not need to elaborate further, Mr. Speaker.

[Mr. Alexander.]

Mr. W. Cheeseman, president of Westinghouse, made a speech in Kitchener recently and voiced his concern about the path being taken by this government. In the course of his remarks he said:

Are we going to demand that government planning, government policies and government actions should be aimed at making Canada viable industrially through hard-headed business decisions? Through realistic, not naïve, trading arrangements and through a determination to upgrade more of Canada's raw materials here in Canada and gain the advantages of solidly based secondary industries.

In what other country of the industrial world will you find corporation income tax at the 52 per cent level? Not to mention the so-called temporary 3 per cent surtax! In the United Kingdom the tax rate was 45 per cent but is due soon to be reduced to 42.5 per cent. In the U.S. it is 48 per cent. In Japan the rates are from 26 to 35 per cent. In France it is 50 per cent, and in Italy 49.5 per cent (if they catch you!) The difference doesn't sound like much but an additional 2 to 4 per cent corporate income tax is another cost burden of real significance to Canadian producers in fiercely competitive world markets.

If a greater proportion of the growing work force is to be employed, the new jobs cannot be provided by an increased rate of public spending.

He went on to say:

There are a number of efficient, labour intensive, industries in Canada where growth has slackened or levelled off in the last few years. As a result, capital will not be put into industries until there is some assurance of a growth environment. And there can be none, unless government adopts policies which strengthen existing efficient industries in both their own domestic markets and in export markets.

To make matters worse, Mr. Speaker, Canada has dropped to No. 4 in the most prosperous nations category as indicated by the World Bank. The sequence is as follows: the United States, Sweden, Switzerland, Canada. I have often heard the member for Don Valley refer to the goals of full employment, a high and sustained rate of economic growth, reasonable price stability, a viable balance of payments position and an equitable sharing of rising incomes. The government needs an economic policy which is devoted to growth and full employment for all Canadians. It would seem to me, therefore, that our role should be to articulate the need for full economic growth so that the Canadian economic potential can be completely realized.

I know that the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Munro) will be interested in the remarks of Senator David Croll as reported in the *Toronto Daily Star* of Wednesday, November 11, 1970. The Senator said:

Anti-poverty programs will be ineffective unless the government takes steps to end economic uncertainty and curb rising unemployment.

I know that the minister is very concerned about the poor, as I am, but when I look at the attitude of this government I wonder how credible it really is. The Senate committee is working on a four-year plan to lift four million people out of poverty. Therefore, a high and sustained economic growth must be assured in order to provide programs to overcome shortcomings in existing welfare measures, education and retraining programs, legal and medical aid, and housing. Notwithstanding