

Supply

and whose lives are being scarred by a set of circumstances which they did not create. That is what one hears when one talks to young people, when one talks to the one young person out of the five who is unable to get a job in this country.

Often when we hear this tragedy discussed we hear it discussed in terms of the economic costs of unemployment, how much it costs us in employment insurance, in dollar terms. But how seldom do we hear this tragedy discussed in terms of the social costs to the country, and the greatest social cost to this country today is in the 500,000 young people who are out of work, the almost two million people in total who are without jobs in Canada today. We are not only losing their creativity and productivity, their ability to help develop this country, but these young people are also being condemned to a loss of dignity, a loss of self-worth and a loss of the very thing which each of us had on coming into the workforce. We had a feeling that we could do something to contribute to this country, a feeling that Canada needed us. But the young people of today are being condemned to a feeling that somehow or other they are not needed, that there is nothing they can contribute, and that is what brings about the loss of self-worth.

What is worst of all is that these young people are being forced by circumstances which they did not create to now assume the burden of paying for those errors. They are being forced to pay for the mistakes made by the present Liberal Government, particularly in the last four years.

When I mention mistakes, I look back to the economic plans, misguided Budgets and inappropriate policies brought forward by this Government in the last four years, certainly with the 1981 Budget in such sectors as the energy sector. What did those policies do? They caused widespread unemployment right across the country. There are the mistakes not only of introducing these policies, but the mistakes which the Government has made in administering the programs which it says are going to help out.

The Special Employment Initiatives Program, for example; how was that administered? It was administered by padding up Liberal ridings, treating the unemployed in this country, especially the youth unemployed, as if somehow or other a double standard should exist, that if they lived in a riding other than those held by a Liberal Member of Parliament they should not be considered as unemployed.

There has been a mistake made by the Government in not aggressively developing new and comprehensive training and counselling programs which could really prepare our young people for the changing and highly competitive world of new technologies.

I know that those comments may in some sense sound partisan. I believe they are true, but let me go beyond the comments and quote from some of the studies which are being done to show what is really happening to young people in our country today. I will quote from a recent report, Sir, of the Canadian Mental Health Association, entitled "Unemployment: Its Impact on Body and Soul". Chapter 6 in that study is headed, "Are youth the silent victims?" I would like to just quote from page 35 of that study, which says:

It is cruel irony that while our social institutions promote the importance of economic independence as a measure of maturity, our economic policies have created a situation in which youth are hard-pressed to find employment. They thus remain, by social definition, immature and dependent. This "dependency" can take the form of reliance on parents, on the state, on drugs. Regardless of its form, it is counter-productive to blame young people for their predicament when it is policies and structures that have created the context in which growth is stifled.

That, Sir, is not said by a body which is given to partisan statements. That is said by the Canadian Mental Health Association which has studied the impact of unemployment on young people. When it makes that statement it uses such words as "dependency, reliance, predicament". If I were to emphasize those words, Sir, I would say that they bring home, far more than statistics, what is really happening to people under the age of 25. Those words put the human, tragic face upon numbers and unemployment rates and the seasonally adjusted totals which we hear every time Statistics Canada releases its report on the labour force.

Let there be no mistake, Sir, the figures did not grow so alarmingly, nor remain high, because our young people are unwilling to work. That is not the case. It is not because they do not want to go to work. It is because they cannot find a job, any job at all, and the social consequences are alarming, particularly among those looking for their first jobs rather than continuing on in post-secondary education.

The study I quoted from, which was produced by the Canadian Mental Health Association, points out that unemployed youth are likely to feel bored, with nothing to do, no money to do it with, no clear goals and no sense of purpose. Second, they are likely to flounder in their search for a sense of personal identity; third, to have lower self-esteem than their peers who are employed or in school; fourth, to feel humiliated, and blame themselves for not staying in school or trying harder; fifth, to feel angry at, and resentful of, themselves and their parents, teachers, employers, governments and other institutions; and, finally, to be disillusioned with themselves and their society.

It is interesting to see some of the headlines which appear in the newspapers which collaborate these statements. I have one here which reads, "Jobless Youth: Hope the Major Casualty". And another reads, "Youth Revolt Feared Unless Jobs Available". This is what is happening to young people, and it is documented and clear if the Government would only take a look at what is happening. These are the feelings of young men and women supposedly, Sir, in the prime of their lives. In days past they would normally have been planning their futures. They would have been thinking about getting married, dreaming of being promoted in their jobs, or planning on buying a home or a car. That is the sort of thing they can no longer envisage. They cannot think about it. Instead, at the age of 20 or 21 they are prepared to give up. They have already been looking for a year or two years and they see no real future for themselves. No job, no money and a rapidly diminishing self-respect is the legacy that the Liberal Government has given to these young people.