

As you are well aware, there is a large seasonal component to unemployment. In the Atlantic provinces, the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate not only masks the true unemployment picture, but is subject to unilateral manipulation by that agency of the federal government—Statistics Canada, with whom New Brunswick in particular has had a disastrous experience with respect to the equalization formula.

There are many interesting comments which could be made about that hon. minister's statement. I do not know whether Statistics Canada can be blamed entirely, but it seems to me—I am glad to see that the minister is back in his seat, and I know that he will correct me if I am wrong—that there has been a real effort made by the minister and his officials to keep from the public and members of this House some of the more distasteful pictures which have emerged about job vacancies. For example, I think that there have been memoranda which have found their way out into the public realm and into the House which show that the minister and his department are very reluctant to have the people of Canada know the extent of unemployment in this country.

I have listened to my friend, the hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath), for many months while he has tried to bring to the attention of the House the situation of the hidden jobless. I have heard members in the New Democratic Party do the same thing. But this government steadfastly refuses to concede—or did until additional information came out—that anything other than the official figures as put out by Statistics Canada or the department could indicate the true state of unemployment. This kind of dishonesty is wrong, and it also indicates the attitude of this government in showing its distaste for job vacancy figures, another point which has been emphasized from this side of the House on different occasions.

How can people be expected to find employment in this country when there are only approximately 50,000 jobs available officially and there are perhaps, as my friend from Winnipeg North has indicated, over one million people unemployed? It does not make sense. Many provinces have made submissions to this government indicating ways in which they felt this bill could be improved and better administered, but again they met with absolutely no co-operation.

It is obvious, as far as answers to this country's unemployment question are concerned, that this government does not have any, when \$4 billion is paid out as a drain on this country's economy and as a graphic testament to the failure of this government to take advantage of this nation's potential. If one thinks of the multiplier effect or the spin-off in the form of other unfortunate consequences as a result of the poor administration of this \$4 billion, it is disastrous. This \$4 billion is half of what the entire federal budget was not too many years ago.

When one thinks of the contribution that could be made to this country if those persons receiving the \$4 billion in benefits were able to work, pay income tax and put their creativity to good use one begins to wonder. Some of them undoubtedly would be able to give up unemployment benefits and start their own businesses or create things which would enrich this country, instead of having to sit at home as do the people in my part of the country.

### *Unemployment Insurance Act*

The people in my part of the country are not sitting at home and sucking their thumbs. They are looking for work, but they also feel that they have a right to live where they would like to in this country, where their forefathers have lived, and where they feel they have a right to make a decent living in the process.

A former minister of finance some years ago made the remark that it would be more appropriate for people to move out of depressed areas in this country.

**An hon. Member:** One-way tickets.

**Mr. MacKay:** Yes, one-way tickets, as my friend has said. By taking that approach, the minister merely helped to exacerbate the attitudes of many people in this country.

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The minister introduced this bill at a time when we are supposed to be considering national unity in this country. We are supposed to be considering equality of opportunity and a chance to develop that part of the country where confederation began. Instead of that, we get gratuitous insults about the kind of life we have a right to live in eastern Canada and are told that we are probably sucking our thumbs instead of trying to work. I do not really believe that the minister meant that literally.

**An hon. Member:** Or said it.

**Mr. MacKay:** If he did not say it, Mr. Speaker, then the minutes of that committee ought to be checked. If he did not say it, he came so close to saying it, as the minutes reflect, that a lot of people across the country, including the news media, television commentators, and members of parliament have been misinterpreting what he did say. The Canadian Press among many others.

If the minister did not say it, then it is interesting that the old fox, the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. MacEachen), had to go to such great lengths to explain what he did say. I do not think he got very far in convincing Cape Bretoners and Nova Scotians that he did not say it. Perhaps the minister will have better luck in trying it again, but I doubt that very much.

The process of unemployment insurance benefits has really been deranged and dehumanized over the years by administrative incompetence. First of all, the government had to go through the exercise of divorcing unemployment insurance, and the Canada Manpower strategy, setting up separate offices all across the country, confusing the public in the process, trying desperately to improve on a system that was working satisfactorily and then going through what to anyone else would be colossal humiliation. This government, however, has delusions of divine omnipotence and expects the people of Canada to take this in stride. It proposes to undo all that which had been done at taxpayers' expense at a cost of several hundreds of millions of dollars of administrative costs.

They are now putting unemployment insurance offices and manpower offices back together again. That they should come