

*Control of Inflation and Unemployment*

because of statistical reasons which I do not intend to go into. The minister is taking some consolation from the fact that there was a dip in the seasonal figure based on an entirely false understanding of the figures. This is misleading, apart from the gravity of the present situation.

We say that the government's policies have been deliberately designed to increase unemployment, to slow down the economy. I say to the members of the government that this is the only policy in which they have really succeeded, because unemployment has gone up and the economy has slowed down. The Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) is neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet so far as I know, but he certainly prophesied correctly when the other day he emphasized that he expected unemployment to go to 6 per cent. He has it. He has 6.1 per cent for January and I suspect, by looking at the unemployment figures for other years, that the unemployment rate now as I am addressing this House may well be closer to 6½ per cent than to 6 per cent. But altogether more disturbing even than this figure itself, although it would be enough, is the fact that there is no indication the government is ready to call a halt to this continuing descent into recession.

The Prime Minister and his colleagues are so obsessed with the subject of inflation in a completely wrong context, and are so hide-bound by traditional use of their doctrinaire orthodoxy, that they show little concern for the well-being of the Canadian people in the next year or two, particularly the working people who increasingly will be unemployed in this country. I say the unemployment figures are serious not only because the rate has gone up to 6 per cent nationally but because when you look at the figures you see results which are disturbing even more deeply than the over-all figure. One finds that the unemployment figures in the Atlantic provinces and in Quebec continue to be considerably higher than the national average. It is true that the unemployment figure in the Atlantic provinces has not gone up and is about the same as it was a year ago, but I submit it was high enough a year ago at 10 per cent and could hardly be expected to go any further without an even greater disaster for the people in that region. The same is true in respect of the province of Quebec, where the figure has remained about the same at about 8 per cent. I make the same comment in that regard.

What is important to note from the point of view of the welfare of Canada's economy and Canadians across the country is that, for the first time in some years, the unemployment figures are increasing across the country. For the first time in some years the actual Ontario figure is as high as 4.2 per cent. The figure for the prairie provinces is as high as 4.6 per cent and the figure for British Columbia is as high as 7.3 per cent.

• (3:20 p.m.)

What that means is that right across this country, no longer limited to any particular regions, the unemployment figures have reached a dangerous point which indicates a definite recession in the economy of this country. I ask members of the House and the people of Canada to note the following fact about these figures, perhaps one of the most disturbing of all, that is that unemployment has affected and is affecting the young people of Canada considerably more than the middle aged and older members of Canada's work force. The largest increase is to be found in the group of 14 to 19 year olds. Canadians just leaving school are unemployed. The country cannot take care of them, and all the bitterness, alienation and resentment that that produces in the breasts of young people who are faced with this kind of situation is horrible to contemplate, having in mind the future of this country.

The next largest group of unemployed is to be found in the group aged between 20 and 34, which again means that young people who may have just married and have young families are hit the hardest by the scourge of unemployment which the government has deliberately produced in its alleged fight against inflation. This rich, affluent country about which the Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson) and every other minister boasts, is unable to give work to the young people leaving our schools and to the young people who have entered adulthood and are beginning to build a family life in this country.

Finally, I ask hon. members and I ask the people of Canada to note that this deliberate government policy of increasing unemployment is the greatest boon to Levesque and the separatists in Quebec and threatens the unity of Canada from coast to coast.

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

**Mr. Lewis:** The disaffection in the prairies, the disaffection in the province of Quebec, the feeling of injustice in all the regions of this