

*Business of Supply*

already spoken for a long time but, frankly, his speech was nothing more than a lot of words with some statistics. I hope he will give us the benefit of his views frankly and honestly, bereft of propaganda.

I believe that the most important thing this motion does is to focus attention not only on the government's failure to provide jobs for Canadians but on the obvious lack of co-ordination in the workings and policies of various governmental departments, and on the daily economic havoc being wrought by this lack of organization and purpose. I have in mind in particular the dramatic widening of the economic gulf between various regions in Canada. We have just been debating the setting up of a new department to deal with this very problem of regional disparity, but even while we have been doing so the problem has been allowed to grow unchecked to mammoth proportions. That is what I meant when I referred to the lack of co-ordination between departments and the lack of organization and purpose.

The unemployment figure with which we are all most familiar is 6 per cent. But we should remember that this figure is the national average for the whole country. The real picture escapes us until we break it down into its regional components. For instance, while the national unemployment figure stands at 6 per cent of the labour force, in the Atlantic region, an area that comprises four of Canada's ten provinces, it is an appalling high of 10.5 per cent, and I dare say it is away above that in the province of Newfoundland. The figure for the province of Quebec stands at 8.4 per cent. Yet in Ontario and on the prairies unemployment is moderate, standing at 3.9 per cent for each area. In British Columbia it is 6.6 per cent.

These figures give a more stark and shocking picture of what unemployment means to Canada than does the national one of 6 per cent. These figures indicate that to those who have more will be given, and from those who have not more will be taken away. This is the very essence of the grave national problem of regional disparity, a subject which was introduced at the recent federal-provincial conference by the Premier of Nova Scotia and which had not even been thought of prior to that by the federal government.

Until the Minister of Manpower can translate his theories into fact and provide the training and mobility for Canadian workers promised by the government of which he is a member, regional disparity will continue to

sap our national strength. Regional unemployment, which is tangible proof of regional injustice and regional inequalities, is a cancer furtively eating away at the economic body of Canada. We cannot be an entirely healthy nation in an economic sense until we can do better than to have 66,000 out of 626,000, better than one-tenth, of the Atlantic labour force unemployed.

If such conditions were general it might be a different story. But while the Atlantic region, Quebec, and to a lesser extent British Columbia, are staggering along with a tremendous burden of unemployment, Ontario and the prairies are relatively well off in this regard. The disparity between regional unemployment rates is like a hurricane or a holocaust of fire that creates a tremendous suction, drawing everything into the centre and exaggerating an already bad situation. If this disparity continues, skilled workers and highly trained graduates from the Atlantic region and from Quebec will continue to be sucked into the central areas of greater opportunity at an ever-increasing rate and in ever-increasing numbers. This may be excused on the ground of the working of immutable laws of economics, but it can never be excused from the point of view of national development, national unity or national prosperity.

When we consider that the majority of our gravest problems are direct outgrowths of regional disparity we can see plainly the absolute necessity to develop a balanced economy and a balanced national life. Regional disparity is a curse in many ways. It is the mother of strained federal-provincial relations, of a whole series of financial problems, and contributes in no small way to our difficulties in relation to national unity and national progress. To achieve this balance ways must be found to check the flow of bodies, brains and brawn from the have-not to the have regions. Somehow we must make the far pastures of Ontario and the prairies appear less green. By this I do not mean that we should deceive anyone. I mean we must make it economically more attractive to stay in our own backyard. Certainly we can never demonstrate this with unemployment figures as they stand today. No amount of words such as we heard from the minister this afternoon, no amount of eyewash, can persuade anyone from the Atlantic region, where the unemployment rate is 10 per cent, that it is a better spot economically than Ontario where the rate is only 3.9 per cent.