

*Supply*

ments like the one he mentioned that has created a lot of problems in the country.

I want to add a comment about the Peterson Government of Ontario to which he referred. Ontario went through unprecedented good times during the period of the Peterson years in the 1980s. There was a tremendous economic boom. At that time the government locked Ontario into a spending pattern which was unrealistic when the good times ended and the recession hit.

We can debate why the recession hit. One reason was world-wide recession. Another reason, I maintain, was the free trade deal with the United States which gave away too much, particularly for the province of Ontario because of manufacturing, the slowdown of the economy, and the GST. All those things together put the province of Ontario into a very difficult situation which has created many more unemployed in Ontario than there would have been if those policies had not been followed.

In my province of Saskatchewan with its tremendous \$15 billion debt, as I said the highest per capita in the country, and fewer than one million people, jobs are being lost right across the province. That is now true right across Canada. As a result of the heavy debt a large part of the expenditure of the taxpayer goes to pay interest on the debt.

I welcome the opportunity provided by the opposition day debate today about our unacceptably high level of unemployment and the fact that government policies have not succeeded in bringing down the unemployment rate. As the motion says it is especially unfortunate for the future of young people in Canada.

We have an unemployment rate of 11.4 per cent. That is only the official unemployment rate. In addition, many more Canadians are working at part-time low income jobs, making a few dollars an hour for only a few hours a week. They are unable to properly feed their families. They are underemployed doing things they are not trained for.

We also have literally hundreds of thousands of Canadians now on welfare in every community across the country. In fact the Catholic bishops said that around

three million Canadians were either unemployed, on welfare or underemployed. That is a tremendous tragedy in a society that has developed the technology to transplant hearts, in a society that has developed the technology to fly to the moon and put a man or woman on the moon.

• (1635)

With all the resources we have—and we have the most abundant resources in the world—and with all the training, all the skills and all the goodness we have, around a quarter of our work force is either unemployed or living on welfare. That is a tremendous tragedy and a tremendous legacy that has been left to our country by the Conservative government across the way.

We are facing a tremendous crisis in unemployment. We have the second highest unemployment rate of any country in the Organization of Economic Co-Operation and Development. Only Italy has a higher unemployment rate than our country. It is one of the reasons we have a debt problem. It is one of the reasons tremendous strain is being put on our social programs. It is why medicare is under siege. It is why education is under tremendous pressure in terms of funding and financing. It is that many people are unemployed.

When someone is unemployed we have the human cost of the unemployment in terms of the human tragedy for that person and his or her family, kids, spouse and people who live with him or her. Aside from the human cost we have a tremendous economic cost in terms of unemployment insurance funds paid to the unemployed person, welfare costs when the unemployment insurance runs out and other social costs that are run up because someone is unemployed. It is a tremendous cost to our society.

On the other side the unemployed person is not going to be paying taxes, income tax, very much GST, provincial sales taxes or other taxes imposed or levied by the three levels of government. That person is not paying into the country or paying into our society and in turn is taking a lot out of society in terms of unemployment insurance and welfare programs that are cost-shared by the federal and provincial governments.