

faced with the kind of problems everybody would like to have. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson) has been told recently that the performance of the Canadian economy has been breaking all records for years.

If members of the opposition wish to contribute to the fight against unemployment, they could make fewer speeches and stop blocking legislation. I refer particularly to Bill C-207, the omnibus bill which among other things would setup a Department of the Environment responsible for pollution control. This department will see to the construction of several sewage treatment plants and the implementation of a good number of projects and programs likely to create many jobs.

On the other hand, knocking our national policy surely does not help to create confidence among investors who might be considering investments in Canada.

We hear hon. members of the opposition day after day criticizing the government policy and the methods used to fight unemployment. I have not yet heard a single suggestion likely to alleviate the problem.

If I were to point out a shortcoming among the Canadian people, I should say that they do not care enough to buy products manufactured in Canada. According to recent figures, each Canadian citizen imported goods worth \$700 in 1970, whereas in the United States imports per capita amounted to \$180, and in Japan, to \$150. It might be advisable to do some promotion for the products manufactured in this country and to encourage Canadians to buy more of them.

Mr. Speaker, I know that some opposition members are anxious to be heard, and I think I should now close my remarks.

● (9:00 p.m.)

[English]

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I am very concerned about having to take part in this debate, primarily because it was not too long ago that we had an opportunity of expressing our feelings in no uncertain terms with respect to the attitude of the government. But once again we find that as a result of the government's callousness and its direct lack of concern, as shown in the policy it is attempting to implement, it is necessary that we continue to drive home the fact that the country is facing a national crisis. This crisis is brought about by the government's fiscal and monetary policies. These are not my words; they are the words of the mayors of several Canadian municipalities.

My own city of Hamilton, which is similar to many other cities in terms of the hardships it is encountering because of the government's policies, is facing an increase in welfare expenditures totalling more than \$3 million over last year's expenditures. This is a frightening situation, considering the tax base upon which cities operate. I am at a loss to know where cities will get the extra money they need for welfare unless tax reforms are brought about as a result of federal and provincial concern. It is time for such concern when a city like Hamilton, with a population of 300,000 people, is budget-

Alleged Non-Support of Employment Programs
ing for welfare costs of some \$10.5 million, about \$3 million more than last year.

I would like to quote from a document prepared by R. J. Protti, research officer for the Canadian Federation of Mayors and Municipalities, entitled "Welfare Expenditures and Local Government", issued January 22, 1971. In it he reports on the results of a questionnaire submitted to members of the federation concerning the welfare implications of current high rates of unemployment. One of the questions asked of municipalities was: "What is the rate of unemployment in your municipality?" He reports as follows:

Answers to question (a) ranged from minimal to over 13 per cent. Some respondents indicated that they expected the unemployment situation to worsen in the first three or four months of 1971.

What was most notable about responses to question (a) was the number of approximations and "guess-estimates" of unemployment rates that had to be made for particular municipal units. Neither the Dominion Bureau of Statistics nor Canada Manpower offices could provide accurate unemployment statistics for a specific municipality. The Dominion Bureau of Statistics only supplies unemployment rates monthly on a provincial basis. Canada Manpower offices generally cover areas which can and most often do include more than two municipal units.

I take it from this that even the municipalities do not know exactly how many people are unemployed in their own communities. If the city of Hamilton thinks it has something like 20,000 unemployed, Lord knows what the actual figure is. Also, in replying to the questionnaire the municipalities indicated that they were concerned about the cost-sharing arrangements among all levels of government in respect of welfare expenditures. Notwithstanding what the hon. member for Don Valley (Mr. Kaplan) has said, Mr. Speaker, this is an important matter to the cities.

In British Columbia the federal share is 50 per cent, the provincial share 30 per cent and the municipalities pay 20 per cent. It is the same ratio in Alberta. In Saskatchewan provincial government pays 45 per cent and the municipalities 5 per cent. In Ontario the ratio again is 50 per cent federal, 30 per cent provincial and 20 per cent municipal. The municipalities are very concerned about the reluctance of the federal government to help further. I respectfully submit that we are facing a national crisis, notwithstanding the speech of the hon. member for Don Valley. It is time for federal action before it is too late.

● (9:10 p.m.)

We cannot continually hide behind the Constitution, Mr. Speaker, because in the long run this means we are not credible. In order to be credible we must recognize that we are experiencing a national crisis when 668,000 members of our labour force are unemployed, acknowledging that this is primarily due to the fiscal and monetary policies of the government. When the mayors were asked what measures they believed could and should be taken by the federal government to alleviate the situation, they replied: