

The Budget—Mr. T. C. Douglas

available, it is not going to get the kind of construction program that will put the unemployed people back to work.

What does the government propose? It does not propose to do anything except to sit on its dignity. I think it is time we took a moment to look at what these unemployment figures mean. First, let us see what they mean by provinces. I said a little while ago that the unemployment figure was 6½ per cent in Canada. In British Columbia it is 6.7 per cent. On the Prairies unemployment has risen from 3.9 per cent a year ago to 5.3 per cent in February of this year. This is the very area where crop conditions and the inability to sell the farmers' wheat has already caused economic dislocation. Unemployment in this area is at its highest peak in years. The figure in Ontario has risen from 3.9 per cent to 4.5 per cent.

In the province of Quebec the figure has risen from 8.4 per cent to 8.7 per cent. The Prime Minister talks a great deal about combating separatism. I, personally, think that the unemployment figures are much higher than the figures announced today. The fact that 8.7 per cent of the work force in the province of Quebec is unemployed will do more to destroy national unity and to bring about disintegration of Confederation than any other single thing.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): The most dangerous thing that can happen in a nation is when any group of people gets to the point where they say, "We have nothing to lose". When a man is walking the streets, out of a job and with no prospect of getting a job, he will listen to any demagogue and any false proposition. If we want to promote national unity and hold this country together as a viable sovereign power, we have to see to it that the people in the less favoured areas of Canada have jobs and an equal opportunity to enjoy a good life.

In the Atlantic provinces in the month of February the unemployment figure was 11 per cent. Two weeks ago I was in Newfoundland where the figure is 13 per cent. I was told that in certain areas of Newfoundland the figure is 20 per cent. How can a spirit of national unity be maintained when certain parts of Canada feel that they are the Cinderellas of Confederation? They are a long way from Ottawa. They wait for some expression of the government's concern. The only expression they have had from the gov-

[Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands).]

ernment is the shrugging shoulders of the Prime Minister and the assurance from the Minister of Finance that he will keep on turning the screws until price increases stop.

If this unemployment figure is looked at by age groups, it is more alarming. In the group of young people from 14 to 19 years of age, 13½ per cent of them are out of work. In the group of young people 20 to 24 years of age, the figure is 8.9 per cent; almost 9 per cent. Almost one in ten of these young people are unemployed. These young people have their lives ahead of them. They are the ones who will be responsible for the future of this country. When these young people are unable to find employment, we are storing up a great deal of trouble for ourselves. Of the more elderly people aged 55 to 64, 6.2 per cent of that group is unemployed. Unless these people get back to work, they will be unemployable. Not many of them in that age bracket will be able to get a new job. These people are likely to finish out their days on welfare.

It is interesting to note that the length of time that people are unemployed is increasing steadily. I refer to a question answered on March 4 this year, page 4364 of *Hansard*, which shows that the length of time that a person is unemployed has been increasing in the years 1967, 1968 and 1969.

This House should concern itself with the price that we are paying for the government's default. We should look at unemployment in terms of what it is costing this country. What is it costing this country in terms of lost production? The Economic Council of Canada, in one of its early reviews, said that every time we reduce unemployment by one percentage point, we increase the wealth production in Canada by \$2 billion and that roughly one-third of that amount would find its way into the treasuries of the various governments of Canada.

The Economic Council of Canada said we should be able to keep unemployment at least at 3 per cent. If we could reduce unemployment to that figure of 3 per cent, we would increase the wealth production of this country anywhere between \$6 billion and \$7 billion a year, of which over \$2 billion a year would find its way into the treasuries of the respective governments of Canada.

I listened the other day to the hon. member for Bruce (Mr. Whicher) accusing the members of the New Democratic Party of always wanting new programs. He kept saying, where will you get the money? Mr. Speaker, this is where we will get the money. We can