

Government Orders

harmful to so many Canadians and particularly the people in Winnipeg.

Would my colleague comment on a situation, for example, where the unemployment rate in Winnipeg now stands at 8.5 per cent, up from 7.9 per cent last year. Winnipeg is now fourth out of eleven major Canadian cities as far as this unfortunate statistic is concerned.

In rural and northern Manitoba unemployment rates are even higher. Unemployment rates run from 27 per cent in villages in the Interlake area of Manitoba to 90 per cent on reserves and northern communities. Thousands of people are not even counted in the government's figures because they are chronically unemployed or have never had an opportunity to get a job.

When I listen to the government side speak I am reminded of what John Kenneth Galbraith said about Ronald Reagan. Ronald Reagan's economic strategy was based on the fact that he thought the rich did not work because they pay too many taxes and the poor did not work because they made too much money, so he stopped taxing the rich and started taxing the poor.

This bill is a variation of this thesis. The government has taken the strategy that the way to improve the condition of working people across the country is to give them less security, less assistance and to put them up against the wall.

If you take a vulnerable economy, Manitoba's, where so many people are hurt, it is hard to believe that this government thinks this strategy is going to be helpful in any way, shape or form.

Does he think Manitoba is going to be spared this awful legislation, or will they be hurt like people in his part of the country?

Mr. Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, I will give a very brief reply because I am very interested in hearing what the hon. member for Carleton—Gloucester says about this matter.

I regret to say that the province of Manitoba and the city of Winnipeg in particular will not be spared the harmful effects of this very backward piece of legislation. It will be damaged just like the rest of the country and I hope the people of Manitoba will remember this when they next come to pass judgment on the Conservatives. Certainly if they remember it, and the effects of this

legislation will be before them every day, then this government will not survive the next election.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jacques Vien (Laurentides): Mr. Speaker, in 1984, the national unemployment rate was 11.6 per cent. In August 1989, unemployment had dropped to 7.4 per cent. Since 1984, this government has created 1,500,000 jobs. Ninety-six per cent or 1,300,000 were full-time jobs, while 200,000 were part-time jobs. Mr. Speaker, of these 1,500,000 jobs, 677,000 were filled by men and 878,000 by women.

Mr. Speaker, the new labour force development strategy involves reallocating \$1.3 billion of the unemployment insurance budget to upgrading the labour force. A total of \$1.8 billion will be allocated to the Canadian job strategy and training, to upgrade skill levels of workers across the country. In 1990, the government wants the labour force to be highly qualified in order to be competitive on international markets. In the past, our strength was derived from our natural resources, which were our only resource. Today, being competitive depends more on the skills of our workers.

Mr. Speaker, our competitors are improving productivity in the fields of technology, innovation, education and occupational training. Between 1990 and the year 2000, our workers will need a knowledge of and expertise in data processing, communications and robotics, as well as analytic skills. Canada's labour force must have the highest possible level of education. More Canadians are graduating from high school and more and more are becoming professionals. Unfortunately, an average of 30 per cent still drop out of high school.

Basic skills are a prerequisite for acquiring the most sophisticated professional skills. By the year 2000, 50 per cent of Canadian jobs will require more than five years of education and professional training beyond the secondary level. Every year, more than one million Canadians have trouble finding jobs because of their lack of skills.

Mr. Speaker, the government is committed to implementing a broad strategy to keep pace with developing markets in the 1990s. It intends to maintain the principal functions of our social security and income-support system. Mr. Speaker, the government intends to increase active measures to assist employment, as opposed to passive income maintenance. Changes in the unemploy-