

Employment

States' fault. It is Europe's fault. It is somebody else's fault, but not ours. Please do not blame us. We are struggling along but we have to do what is dictated to us by somebody else", that is to say, whoever that somebody might be. The third point which came across loud and clear was, "If we were not here, it would be a lot worse." That is probably the most unbelievable explanation the government has tried to give all day.

We should review some of the statements made by some hon. members. The Minister of Communications (Mr. Fox) stated that he deplores the complete inaction of the government with respect to the creation of jobs. He regrets the cutbacks in Canadian work programs which eliminated hundreds of communities across Canada which have been suffering from high levels of unemployment, and condemns the government for its failure to date to bring forward a comprehensive employment strategy for the coming year. That statement was made after we were in the House for about four weeks.

This particular government has been in power for two years now. We have not seen an employment strategy. As a matter of fact, we have not seen any strategy. Earlier today we listened to the Minister of Employment and Immigration and to the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Gray), or whatever he may have been demoted to now—I am not sure what he is. That may have been part of his resignation program which he promised if interest rates rose. This may be a way of easing him out. We have heard members on the back benches tell us today how much money they take out of their pockets to throw around. They spend \$15 million here, \$20 million there.

The hon. member for Louis-Hébert (Mr. Dawson) spent 15 of his 20 minutes reading off a list of industries that the government helped in Quebec. If we asked him for a list for Ontario, it would take him approximately 30 seconds to read it. It is not there.

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that if the government gave me a bank guarantee of \$5 million, I could create 200 high technology jobs in my community tomorrow. Would the government listen? No. It is going to give a small business development bail-out bond to help people in dire straits. But it will not give a hand to production in Ontario. That is where the government should be looking to create jobs. Certainly there should be help for those in financial trouble, but those who are productive now and have high technology operations going should also be receiving money. They are ready to proceed with viable programs and the government does not see fit to help them.

● (2150)

There was another statement, this time by the hon. member for Longueuil (Mr. Olivier), who, I believe, is still Quebec caucus chairman. He said: "In an affluent society such as this, suggestions that a 7 per cent or 8 per cent unemployment rate is acceptable are simply shameful." He is absolutely right, but where is he? Where is that great defender now that we have an

unemployment rate of 7 per cent or 8 per cent? We have not heard from him since he got back into office. We have not heard a word from him.

Then we hear about the creation of many jobs. Hon. members opposite can tell the unemployed of this country about those creative jobs. I can tell hon. members about those 100,000 creative jobs about which the minister brags. How long do those jobs last? They last eight months or ten months, and then the people are out. Then the minister brings in another batch, spreads a few more dollars around and perhaps pleases a few more people. In my constituency of 168,000 people, eight jobs were provided for 40 weeks, and that is all. I will give hon. members statistics respecting how many in my community are collecting unemployment insurance right now. The number was 8,724 as of January 31. In January, 1981, there were 5,500. There has been an increase of over 3,000. That is what is going on, and these programs are nothing but a facade to try to fool the people into thinking the government is doing something. The minister knows this. Members of his own staff say the same thing. They say they are slowly working out of these programs and getting into more meaningful ones. I say it is about time. God bless the minister if that is what he is doing, but I have not seen any signs of it yet.

Hon. members opposite always like to stand up and talk about the programs the Tories cancelled, but they never talk about the programs we brought in to take their place. Those were programs which created meaningful, full-time jobs and not jobs which lasted ten months, eight months or six months. We created permanent jobs which gave individuals opportunities to develop careers for themselves. We created jobs in the volunteer sector, which needed help very desperately. There were all kinds of programs. We would have created twice the number of jobs in the private sector with the same amount of money, with some help, as the number the minister brags about being created in the public sector.

That is the story of this government. Every government member likes to stand up and say, "This is what has been dealt out in my riding", but how many of those jobs are permanent? How many of those jobs the government creates in those ridings will be there ten months from now? There will be very, very few.

I can say to the minister that some of the permanent jobs created for the handicapped are welcome. I think such programs are good and are working to a limited extent. I congratulate the minister for that, but he should not hand us all this malarkey about all the other jobs he is creating, because the statistics he is using are phony, and he knows it. The people are not buying them any more.

As of December, the unemployment rate in Ontario was 7 per cent, up half a percentage point from November, and rising. Lay-offs and closures have put 21,565 people out of work permanently. Those statistics relate only to firms with 50 or more employees. They do not relate to employers with fewer than 50 employees. Those statistics are not gathered unless they are volunteered. They reflect a sad state of affairs. The highest concentration of lay-offs has been in the transportation