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tion, we would find that the actual number of young people who are out of work across the country is in the neighbourhood of 1.4 million Canadians.

During its 16 years in office the Liberal Government has been the architect of the unemployment crisis facing Canada and Canadians today. In 1968 when the Government first took office, total unemployment was approximately 358,000. Last year, in 1983, total unemployment had risen to 1.448 million Canadians. In 1968 one out of every 22 working people was out of a job. Last year that ratio rose to one out of every eight workers. In 1968 the unemployment rate was 4.5 per cent. In 1983 it rose to 11.9 per cent. In 1968 UIC benefits totalled some \$438 million. In 1983 those benefits grew to \$10.2 billion. During this 16-year period total unemployment in Canada increased by approximately 400 per cent.

As bad as the figures of total unemployment are, the youth unemployment situation in the country is even worse. In 1968 the unemployment rate for youth was 7.7 per cent, or 3.2 per cent higher than the total unemployment rate. In 1983 the youth unemployment rate rose to 19.9 per cent, or 8 per cent higher than the total unemployment rate last year. These are staggering increases. However, neither the total unemployment rate nor the youth unemployment rate should be accepted in a modern industrial economy. Youth comprise about 25 per cent of the Canadian workforce and about 37 per cent of its unemployed. When the hidden unemployed, those who have given up looking for jobs because there is no work available, are included in the unemployment totals, youth unemployment then comprises over 40 per cent of those who are unemployed.

These are stark numbers. In more human terms, continuing levels of high youth unemployment could alter the fabric of Canadian society. The longer a young person unsuccessfully looks for work, the more a sense of hopelessness sets in. As the months go by, young unemployed people start losing faith in themselves, their friends and their families and begin to question the worth of society.

I am sure everyone would acknowledge that it will take more than money to solve the youth unemployment problem. It will take attitudinal as well as structural changes. Governments and society face a major task in handling and coping with this problem.

● (1115)

The youth population of Canada indeed has been declining recently. In January of 1984, there were some 4.371 million Canadians aged 15 to 24. That was some 80,000 fewer than in the same month of last year and 182,000 fewer than in January of 1981. The number is expected to drop by an additional 90,000.

I am also sure that everyone would acknowledge the fact that as the Canadian economy expands, obviously more jobs are created. The youth unemployment rate should decline more rapidly and an improved economy will ultimately provide a solution to the youth unemployment rate.

However, waiting does not address the deep problems being faced by young people in this country today. The federal

Government should and could be taking certain actions in various areas to alleviate these problems. The Government should make greater use of the tax system through utilization of unemployment tax credits to encourage youth employment.

Since the Government has already announced that it will be using its purchasing power to encourage the hiring of women and the handicapped, we are of the firm opinion that this same policy should be extended to Canada's youth. The hiring of young people will not be very beneficial if it only leads to lay-offs of older personnel. Therefore consultation must take place among industry, business and labour to ensure that the worker displacement problem does not happen.

Greater emphasis should be placed on training and retraining programs in order to meet the present and future skill needs of the workplace. Task forces have studied and white papers, books, reports and reams of paper have been written about the unemployment needs of the 1980s and 1990s. However, governments, universities, industry and labour must work together in order to ensure a fulfilment of these needs. Greater use ought to be made of the career access program and the apprenticeship programs. As an example of what the future holds if nothing is done now, the National Advisory Panel on Skill Development Leave has pointed out that 35 per cent of Canada's working women, especially in the clerical, banking services and telephone sectors, could be unemployed by the 1990s because of advancement in technology alone.

Consideration should be given to the use of unemployment insurance funds as a development tool as well as a maintenance fashion. This would allow for more creative use of the unemployment insurance system. Too many young Canadians graduate from training programs or educational institutions and cannot find work. It is not because their skills are not in demand but because they cannot make contact with the employer who needs them. In the current fiscal year some 50 per cent of the graduates of classroom training courses are still out of work three months after graduation. In addition, the Ontario Government has shown that community college graduates have an unemployment rate of some 23 per cent as compared with an Ontario youth unemployment rate of some 14.7 per cent. I understand that one of the areas of major unemployment has been the computer-related field. With the ever-increasing use of computers, I find this to be an incredible statistic.

Clearly, therefore, as job-creation agencies, Canada Manpower centres across this country have not been performing adequately. These centres ought to be computerized so that the unemployed as well as the potential employers know what is available to them across the country. The longer it takes to get a job, the more discontented a person becomes with the Canada Manpower centres. As Members, we have all certainly experienced the difficulties with those centres almost on a daily basis. There ought to be better provision of counselling services at these centres throughout the country. The unemployed should not be treated as mere statistics.

More consultation is needed with the provinces as far as educational funding is concerned. We acknowledge the fact