

Supply

average. In Prince Edward Island it is 67.9 per cent, in Nova Scotia it is 78.5 per cent, and in New Brunswick it is 71.8 per cent. The earned income per capita as a percentage of the national average is 59.2 per cent in Newfoundland, 60 per cent in Prince Edward Island, 74.1 per cent in Nova Scotia, and 65.4 per cent in New Brunswick. This is a most shocking statistic which speaks volumes of provincial and federal Government in action.

Unemployment insurance payments per capita as a percentage of the national average are 260 per cent in Newfoundland, 216 per cent in Prince Edward Island, 141 per cent in Nova Scotia, and 205 per cent in New Brunswick. Individual subsidies per capita are 190 per cent of the national average in Newfoundland, 233 per cent in Prince Edward Island, 295 per cent in Nova Scotia, and 295 per cent in New Brunswick.

All that did not happen in 14 months, as the motion of my hon. friend, the Member for Cape Breton-East Richmond (Mr. Dingwall), would suggest in its political thrust. It did not happen in 14 months of Conservative rule. It happened in over 100 years of provincial and federal Conservative and Liberal rule. That is the reality. I do not think that the Government has yet recognized that Canada is diverse. It says it in all its rhetoric, but I do not think it has really impinged on its consciousness that this is indeed a diverse country, not only geographically, but in its human and natural resources as well.

As I watched the implementation of DREE and its conversion to DRIE I had the impression that the thinking was that a federal policy or program should apply equally to all parts of the country and that all the decisions have to be made in Ottawa. It has not occurred to the Government that there is something called "decentralization". It did not occur to Governments of the past, nor has it occurred to the present Government, that there is a thing called "economic planning". I know that to many of these Conservatives the words "economic planning" are an anathema. However, it seems to me that Atlantic Canada is now reaping the harvest of the lack of economic planning or economic strategizing of the last 100 years. The Government has always followed a "top down" approach. You throw a few dollars at the top and let it trickle down.

DREE was developed by a Liberal Government specifically for Atlantic Canada to try to implant some secondary manufacturing industries. As demands on the federal Budget grew, DREE started to diminish. I would like to give my hon. friends some figures which I got from a speech given by the Chairman of the Atlantic Provinces Economic Council. He pointed out that in 1972 DREE expenditures were 67 per cent of UI payments and that by 1982 the reduced DREE expenditures were 10 per cent of the UI payments. In other words, unemployment was becoming a far greater industry than anything that DREE could create.

The Government is now contemplating changes from a central position which will only exacerbate an already serious situation. One example is the changes to the Unemployment Insurance Act. They do not take into consideration the fact

that fishermen in Newfoundland are hardly likely to get 20 weeks of insured earnings this year.

Mr. Tobin: Ten.

Mr. Rodriguez: They are lucky if they get ten. We have heard of the heart-rending situation of the gentleman who gave up his kidney to his sister and could not qualify for the 15 weeks of sick benefits. I sat in the House in 1978 when the Liberals were trying to amend the Unemployment Insurance Act. They had all sorts of reports that said employment was great in Atlantic Canada. They were going to cut back on part-time workers. I remember that we fought that tooth and nail, but they got their way. The pot cannot call the kettle black here, Mr. Speaker.

Another change that is coming is the attack on the deficit. One of the greatest transfers of money is the transfer payments to provincial Governments through subsidies. May I call it one o'clock, Mr. Speaker?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The Hon. Member will have two minutes remaining in his speech plus a ten-minute question and comment period.

It being one o'clock, I do now leave the Chair until two o'clock today.

At 1 p.m. the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

STATEMENTS PURSUANT TO S.O. 22

[English]

AGRICULTURE

STATE OF ECONOMY IN PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Mr. George Henderson (Egmont): "Prince Edward Island and Atlantic Canada agriculture and business alike will die a natural death unless we can change the philosophy of our federal politicians and bureaucrats". That warning came from the President of the P.E.I. Federation of Agriculture last spring.

We have only to look at the Island's potato and tobacco industry to see the truth in these words. The potato industry has hit rock bottom. Prices are low and there are no buyers. Even if farmers could sell their crops, it is hardly worth it. Farmers are getting between 1.5 cents and 2 cents a pound for their potatoes. The cost of production is between 5 cents and 6 cents a pound. Who can afford to stay in business with those returns?