

*Economic Growth and Employment Situation*

less effective. For the non-student jobless youth of Canada, the government's response is so far consistent with the response it has been giving all the other employed in Canada, a sickening, deafening silence.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Stanfield:** The figures released yesterday show that the number of men and women who have been unsuccessfully seeking work for more than four months has jumped from 225,000 in January to 263,000 in February, a 17 per cent increase in one month. This is hardly something of which we can be proud. These people are sometimes called the hard core unemployed. The Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) used that expression yesterday when he tried to suggest that a seasonally adjusted improvement had taken place with regard to the hard core unemployed. That performance by the Prime Minister was a strange kind of intellectual exercise. It may have created some confusion, and it certainly carried no conviction. I sometimes wonder where the Prime Minister gets his statistics. Can it be the same place where he gets his policies? The statistics are as accurate as the policies are effective. That is not saying very much for either one.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Stanfield:** In short, they are god-awful. They are both examples of the incompetence that has become the trademark of this government. I am digressing, Mr. Speaker.

I was saying that the term "hard core unemployed" is often used to describe men and women who have been without a job for four months or more. Personally, I do not like to use that term. I think it is a degrading and inhumane way to sum up a great deal of human misery. I do not like to use it because it is somewhat reminiscent of the term hard core criminal. I suspect that some people who use the term hard core unemployed do so to relieve their own consciences.

**Some hon. Members:** Shame.

**Mr. Pepin:** Come on.

**Mr. Stanfield:** Like habitual drunkards or habitual criminals, these are people whom we can slough off, people who must shoulder the blame for their condition of joblessness. In the vast majority of cases, I do not accept that description of those who have been looking for work in Canada for four months or more. We are talking about the destruction of human dignity resulting from conscious economic policies on the part of this government.

That is why I did not cry "hosanna" when the February figures showed a jump of 7,000 over those of the previous month. That may not be very many, but it is 7,000 too many when we consider that there were already 668,000 Canadians looking for work before. There are now 675,000 in the same boat.

[Mr. Stanfield.]

**Mr. Pepin:** Could I respectfully ask when there was a reference to 7,000?

**Mr. Stanfield:** The reference was to the increased number of unemployed Canadians reported by DBS for the month of February compared to the month of January.

**Mr. Pepin:** Will the hon. member tell me what the figure was for 1969, the average for the past three, five or ten years?

**Mr. Stanfield:** I will be happy to refer to the report of the DBS. The increase in the absolute number of unemployed is reported to be somewhat less than has been usual for the past number of years. I do not make any secret of that any more than I make a secret of the fact that the increase between December and January in absolute numbers was substantially larger than usual. As a matter of fact, according to DBS the seasonally adjusted rate has remained the same.

**Mr. Pepin:** If I can continue my questioning—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. I hesitate to interrupt the minister or the hon. gentleman, but I must bring to the attention of the minister that we have agreed on a time limit for speeches. Perhaps we should allow the hon. gentleman to complete his speech.

**Mr. Douglas:** The minister will have lots of chances to make his speech.

**Mr. Bell:** The minister thinks he is back in school.

**Mr. Stanfield:** I am very happy to debate these questions with the minister on very factual terms. I hope this is the basis on which they will be discussed by the other side of the House. This unemployment is hardly a matter for pride. It is hardly a matter for complacency. I have already stressed the human side and I have also stressed the economic aspects. This country cannot afford mass unemployment. Mass unemployment is a sign of economic sickness as well as of human misery. It weakens the will to fight inflation. It is about time this government recognized that fact.

The simple fact is that yesterday's unemployment figures show that a full year after this government claims to have embarked on a course of economic expansion, the unemployment situation is substantially worse. Certainly, there has been some growth and there will be more. In the face of growth in other developed countries, especially Japan and western Europe, and with the resulting increase in our exports, it would take a government of staggering incompetence to achieve total stagnation in this country.

There is no indication whatsoever that the modest growth we have been experiencing, as well as what is forecast, will substantially reduce the mass unemployment that exists in this country beyond the normal seasonal decline that happens every spring and summer. As the leader of the New Democratic Party reminded us,