

*Supply—Labour*

of the conditions because he comes from an area which is hard hit by the present unemployment situation.

No matter what we may say in this house, and no matter what hon. members on the other side of the house may say in so far as the government's actions are concerned, there is no doubt that the situation at the moment is not a temporary or a seasonal one. It is a serious unemployment situation and one to which, I regret to say, the government is not facing up. Without going into the details, or repeating what other hon. members have said, more particularly the hon. member for Essex East, I would just point to two items. In the release of February 17 produced by the Department of Labour on the employment situation in January, 1960 it is indicated that there were 504,000 people out of employment, without jobs and seeking work. The last page indicates that there were 755,387 people registered at national employment offices. In addition, the Minister of Labour has very properly brought the figures up to date as of February 1. These now show that 792,908 persons are registered at national employment service offices across the country.

I say that this situation is serious. The only remedy, the only answer, which we have before the committee now is the winter works program and, again, the minister very kindly, in answer to a request by the hon. member for Bonavista-Twillingate, tabled a list of projects all over Canada covering municipal winter works, that is, the incentive program so-called for 1959-60. It is with this document that I should like to deal for a moment.

When I say that there are some 500,000 unemployed in Canada today, I might add that I think it is also known from the release which was published by the Department of Labour that at least one third of these are from the province of Quebec and no less than 75,000 from the city of Montreal. Each individual region is covered by this summary. I shall not attempt to deal with that in detail, because I am sure hon. members from both sides of the house will wish to address themselves to those regional areas.

But I do wish to bring to the attention of the committee the position of Quebec as far as this program is concerned. According to the return which the minister has tabled there will be spent in the province of Quebec for the fiscal year 1959-60—that is, up until February 12, 1960—\$1,932,000. That is the federal share of the cost of labour involved in these projects. The program in that province will employ 3,866 people. Unfortunately, that program, while it is of some use in Canada and while it is welcome to that extent, is not of much incentive, as will be seen when it is examined closely. If one looks at the

list which was tabled by the minister, particularly at those items having to do with the smaller municipalities in the province of Quebec, one can see immediately how little use this is to those areas.

If it is not of greater use to the municipalities in Quebec and other provinces; if more municipalities have not been able to take advantage of this scheme, that is due in a large measure to credit restrictions; it is due in a large measure to the huge interest rates which have prohibited municipalities from taking advantage of the situation. For example, I will take one name which comes to mind, the second on the list here, which happens to be Arvida. Here is one project only costing \$13,880 as far as the federal government is concerned, and employing 35 men. If hon. members want to know what is meant in terms of dollars and cents to those 35 men, it is only necessary to multiply by two the federal government's contribution of \$13,880 to get the provincial share, and then you divide that amount among the 35 men. It will not come to a great deal, I can assure you.

One can take, further, the example of Cowansville, for instance where there are three projects costing the federal government \$16,000 and employing 36 people; at La Tuque one project costing \$25,000, employing 40 people. In the city of Montreal, 51 projects costing \$449,000, employing 893 people. This in the city of Montreal where there are today some 75,000 unemployed. What effect can such a small number of jobs have on the total unemployment picture?

Someone has asked about St. Hyacinthe. I do not see one project listed here for that area. I could go on but I do not wish to take up the time of the committee unduly.

I started by saying that the situation was serious and that a large number of people are unemployed. I wish now to deal with certain specific industries in the country where the condition is exceedingly grave. I refer, for instance, to Elliot Lake where 4,000 people were put out of work by a decision with which the committee is conversant. I refer to the cancellation of the Avro contract last year at which time 35,000 or 40,000 were put out of work. I refer to the coal producers in the Atlantic provinces where on a temporary basis some 6,600 people have been put out of work. I refer also to the textile workers for whom this government was going to do so much. In this industry alone some 5,000 people have been put out of work. At this time I am not referring to the over-all situation of unemployment but to a group of four different industries with which this government apparently has not seen fit to cope.