

Unemployment Measures Lacking

more enlightened response than that kind of suggestion, but we have not had any indication that the present government, or for that matter the previous government, has any real appreciation and any real plan for it.

In case my friends in the official opposition object to that, I will acknowledge there was a bill before us last session, which was not passed, but which set out to do something like this. However, I looked at it very closely, and it was a mystery. Indeed the foreshadowing of the debate we had on it was even more mysterious. It did not seem to me that the former government revealed it really had a clear analysis of the impact of technological change on the work force, nor that that particular measure would have done a great deal to meet the over-all problem.

We feel that this is the most crucial part of the unemployment problem today; that the rate of automation and technical change, which is going along almost imperceptibly, particularly in our primary, basic industries, is just tearing the heart out of the old job creation picture which we had. Small communities throughout the country are crying for secondary industry because they think it will work some magic, and each community is willing to outcompete another in terms of tax concessions, free land, and things like that in order to attract secondary industry.

The government has taken its own step through the creation of the Department of Industry, which might do something about this particular problem; but generally it has shown no indication that the problem of technological unemployment, usually caused by the introduction of labour saving and labour changing methods, is of great concern to it. This is the area in which we believe the lead should be given.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre:

That the amendment be amended by inserting therein, immediately after the words "winter unemployment", the following words:

"and also the failure of the government to propose any plans for the fundamental economic and social changes required to deal with the chronic and growing problem of unemployment caused by automation and technological change,"

So that the amendment as amended would then read:

This house regrets the failure of the government to introduce any effective new policies or programs to reduce substantially unemployment in Canada, and in particular to alleviate winter unemployment, and also the failure of the government to propose any plans for the fundamental economic and social changes required to deal with the chronic and growing problem of unemployment caused by automation and technological change, so as to achieve the promised full employment as undertaken in the Liberal party election promises.

[Mr. Fisher.]

[Translation]

Mr. Marcel Lessard (Lake St. John): Mr. Speaker, I am happy—this is a way of speaking—that the house is given the opportunity today to deal with the unemployment problem which is prevailing in Canada at the present time. And this opportunity is due to the former minister of labour, the hon. member for the riding of Ontario (Mr. Starr).

While I was listening to the amendment he was moving, I was reminded of this famous sentence which served as a political slogan for the Conservative party during the 1958 election campaign: No one shall suffer. And I notice that the Leader of the Opposition is in the house at the present time.

Mr. Speaker, when I consider that after six years of Conservative administration and six months under the present Liberal government, the situation is still the same, if not worse, I cannot but think that our poor unemployed in Canada have given rise to a lot of talk, but that very few positive steps have been taken in this house to settle their problems,

But, Mr. Speaker, is it possible here, in this house, to take steps to halt unemployment?

As the saying goes:

Grasp all, lose all.

Well, I believe that this government have simply grasped all when they decided to invade fields which are under provincial jurisdiction, and they are now feeling the consequences.

I am one of those who believe that provincial and municipal governments are the administrative bodies best suited to solve the problems of employment and economic development in this country.

Mr. Speaker, we have been told about planning. Well, in that field also, it is impossible for the federal government to implement a successful planning unless they make sure first of the full and complete co-operation of the provincial administration. This is the reason why I say that the federal government should not consider imposing planning. On the contrary, it should consider first giving back to the provinces the sources of revenue which they need, because they alone are in a position to solve the unemployment problem and to provide the economic development needed in our country.

We have seen the Conservative government during the previous six years initiate a winter works program which seemed at the beginning to have a chance of meeting with some success.

Well, after six or seven years of experience, we are now in an absolutely desperate position where the municipalities can no longer