

Employment Programs

economy. There may be sections in which specific taxes could be used to great advantage and I hope the government will consider the possibility, not only of using monetary fiscal policy but of being a little innovative in its approach to specific needs where we possess the technology and where what is required is some incentive of a kind which the government could rapidly and, I believe economically provide.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. John Lundrigan (Gander-Twillingate): Mr. Speaker, I want to take five or six minutes in which to discuss the unemployment problem in Canada generally and in my own province in particular, as a representative from the east coast. I suppose it would be a waste of time for me to repeat the statistics which have been quoted, to deal with inflation and the government's attempts to combat it or the ill-effects of mounting unemployment in various parts of Canada, particular in urban environments.

I have listened carefully to the observations of the leaders in the House of Commons today and have been impressed by their ability to present their case and advance positive suggestions for easing the unemployment burden. I was most impressed by the remarks of my hon. friend, the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield), his questioning of the present incidence of taxation and his speculation as to whether relieving the tax burden might not stimulate the economy to a tremendous extent. I think his contribution was most reasonable and rational.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Lundrigan: It is difficult for me to convince Members of the House of Commons and, it seems, Canadians generally of the particular seriousness of the unemployment problem in my part of the country. Newfoundland is a small province with only half a million people, and we live a long distance from the centre of activity. For many years Members of Parliament from my province have been bemoaning the fact that severe crises have been brought on by heavy unemployment. I will be reasonable; I do not think the unemployment in my province is entirely the responsibility of the federal government.

Recently events have taken place in the province of Quebec which have driven home the fact that there is a serious social and economic crisis in that province. In recent weeks I have heard members of this House rise in this chamber day after day and argue, with insistence, that Quebec needs particular help in its economic and social problems. Although these, I suppose, have been developing since 1760, suddenly people have become very concerned about the serious crisis in Quebec. I agree there is a crisis in Quebec; but need the people of Canada hear about that kind of revolution and social unrest in my own province before they are convinced that we, too, face a serious economic problem?

[Mr. Harries.]

● (9:10 p.m.)

In a rational way we have been trying to show the Canadian people, and not only in the most sophisticated manner, that we on the east coast of Canada sometimes wonder about this just society, about confederation and the benefits we have received from this great union of Canada. Certainly unemployed Canadians are asking themselves this question. We are concerned because today there is in Canada 6.7 per cent unemployment, with a forecast high of 9 per cent. I believe in February of 1962 there was a 9 per cent unemployment situation in Canada. Using the same model, we are forecasting 9, perhaps 10 per cent at the end of this year or at the beginning of 1971.

How many Canadians fully realize that last year the Dominion Bureau of Statistics admitted that in February there was 15.3 per cent unemployment in my province? Not only that, but unemployment statistics do not truly reflect unemployment in the nation. There is an old expression that statistics can lie. They do not lie intentionally. Those who draw up these statistics are researchers, scientists—reasonable people all. However, the basis upon which they arrive at an assessment of unemployment is inadequate. For example, I could prove that when the Dominion Bureau of Statistics talked last year of 15.3 per cent unemployment, we had in our province perhaps 22 per cent. I further predict that we will reach the point between now and the spring of 1971 where one quarter of our people will be unemployed. Even during the great depression years in North America the unemployment rate was never as high as it is in the province of Newfoundland.

I am not a bit concerned whether the rate is actual or adjusted. How many unemployed Canadians worry over this distinction? What a lot of gobbledygook for us to debate in this House day after day! The unemployment situation is reaching critical proportions. As the Leader of the Opposition has stated, it is no longer a regional problem. For the last two decades the people of Newfoundland have had to leave the province and travel to Toronto in order to take advantage of the seasonal employment situation. As a result, they became skilled in various construction trades. They adapted themselves to urban Toronto life, a difficult adjustment to make. They also made a contribution. Their contribution was a great one because many Newfoundlanders distinguished themselves in the construction trades in various parts of urban Canada. Many of them returned to the province to take advantage of construction opportunities in recent years in my province. Nowadays most of these Newfoundlanders who went to Toronto are part of the breadlines that now form up in that great city. A serious unemployment situation in Canada as a whole affects every region of the country. The unemployment problem in Toronto is having a debilitating effect on the employment situation in the province of Newfoundland.

I should have liked the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion (Mr. Marchand) or his Parliamentary Secretary to hear what I have to say now, but I see neither is in his seat. I trust that someone will bring my remarks to