

Supply

tomorrow notwithstanding. It should then outline its legislative program with respect to inflation, and with respect to some of the things relating to unemployment which have been dealt with in an ad hoc way.

I would like to go back, Mr. Speaker, to the one Throne Speech we have had during this session of Parliament. I go back, incidentally, to April 14, 1980, over three years ago. That speech dealt with a number of issues. It dealt with housing and, peripherally, problems with the fishing industry. We know of course what is happening in the fishing industry today. The Atlantic fishing industry is in a state of collapse, virtual bankrupt, waiting for the Government to act on the recommendation of the Kirby task force which was established over a year ago, and waiting for the Government to get on with the business of trying to restructure the industry to make it viable.

One of the issues dealt with in the Speech from the Throne three years ago was the issue of unemployment. I would like to read briefly from page 5 of *Hansard* for April 14, 1980, as follows:

One of the essential objectives of this Government is to put more people to work.

Halleluia!

Young people, women, natives, and the handicapped face special problems in finding jobs. To meet the needs of these groups, my Government will expand its employment program while using its resources more efficiently. There will be an increased effort to develop critical trade skills so as to better prepare today's labour force for tomorrow's jobs.

What is the record; what does it show? We had the promise, let us look at the performance. In a word, the performance is "dismal".

Since this recession started a year and a half or two years ago we have seen a direct loss of 550,000 jobs in this country. During the recession before that, back in the 1970s, we lost 500,000 jobs. It took us three or four years to regain those lost jobs. Regardless of what the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde) promises tomorrow night, we can anticipate that the rate of recovery will be such that it will take at least that amount of time, if not longer, to recover these lost jobs. That does not say much for the prospects of the 1.6 million Canadians who are officially unemployed.

In addition to the 1.6 million people unemployed, of course, we have the discouraged workers, those who have given up looking for jobs and are not longer counted as unemployed. They are the so-called hidden unemployed. There is also the under-employed, those who are satisfied to get over the present crisis with part-time jobs. If you add all these numbers you have an unemployment rate of approximately 18.3 per cent, or over two million people. That is the performance following the promise made in the Speech from the Throne three years ago.

Surely, the failure of the Government to discharge that commitment it made three years ago would have at least been manifested in a new Speech from the Throne, a new beginning, a new sense of commitment. Even if the Government continues to fail in discharging that commitment, we would at least have the feeling here in the House and in the country that the Government was trying. We have not and do not have that

feeling during this session. We have the uneasy feeling that the Government is not trying.

In the year 1982 the level of employment in Canada was 359,000 below that of 1981. That was the first such year-over-year decline in a quarter of a century. In the previous six years, growth in employment averaged 275,000 jobs per year. On a sectoral basis, the one area which really offends and disturbs me as a Canadian is youth unemployment. I suppose it offends and disturbs all of us, especially at this particular time of year when young people are graduating from our universities and post-secondary institutions, coming onto the job market looking for summer in order to continue their education, with no prospects. Since the beginning of this session the level of employment among young people has dropped 401,000 or 14.8 per cent. We are now looking at a current unemployment rate among young people in the age group of 15 to 24 of 21.3 per cent.

In March of 1982 there were 492,000 unemployed young people. In March of this year the number of unemployed young people had risen to 621,000. All we have to do is look at the calendar, when we talk about 621,000 young people being unemployed, to know that that 600,000 will be joined by another half a million within a very short time, many of them coming into the permanent job market. Equally as important, many will be coming into the job market looking for work to help finance and sustain them as they continue their education.

I submit to you, Mr. Speaker, that this is a situation which should be addressed by this Government, not in terms of ad hoc programs—and they have their place—but in terms of programs which have some validity in law and which are above suspicion in terms of their application with no suggestion of pork-barrelling. We could all have faith, therefore, in the ability of such programs to attack the problem; specifically in this case to address the problem of helping young people find jobs to finance their education, to build careers, and to do all the things which are a part of the growth and lifestyle of this country.

I come from a Province which now has an official unemployment rate of 21 per cent. If you take into account the hidden unemployed, the discouraged workers, we are looking at a situation in which only three out of every four persons has a job. It could be even worse than that, but certainly one in four in my province today is unemployed. The situation in the Atlantic region is not much better. In Quebec, the number of discouraged workers, those who have given up looking for jobs because they believe no work is available, rose 93 per cent between 1981 and 1982. Last month, for example, Statistics Canada reported that there were 120,000 discouraged workers. For the same month one year ago Statistics Canada reported 92,000 discouraged workers. We see an increase in those who have given up of 34 per cent. What prospect do they have? What hope do they have?

If the Government were to prorogue this session after it brings in its budget, and the budget is critically important, we would at least be offering some hope. Today we offer them