

the Department of Manpower, by the Unemployment Insurance Commission and by the Bureau of Statistics, all three of them agencies of the government, giving separate and different statistical information. Frankly, I think each one of them either deliberately or accidentally underestimated the number of unemployed in the nation. I mention this only to counterbalance what the Minister of Labour said on a previous occasion when the figures were not accurate—

**Mr. Drury:** On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. It is my understanding that we are dealing with clause six. I hope we are not rehashing yesterday's budget debate.

**The Chairman:** The Chair was listening to the hon. member for Skeena. I thought that he intended, very rapidly, to relate his opening remarks to clause six.

**Mr. Howard (Skeena):** I do not think the President of the Treasury Board is out of line. He is correct. We are considering clause six. I heard you say that myself, Mr. Chairman. I should have thought the government would have shown some concern about unemployment by operating under the terms of this clause. I believe my remarks are germane and to the point. Let me read the clause:

The Minister of the Environment—shall (a) initiate, recommend and undertake programs and co-ordinate programs of the Government of Canada which are designed to promote the establishment or adoption of objectives or standards relating to environmental quality or to control pollution;

Surely, sufficient is involved in these activities to enable us to relate embarking on undertakings of this sort to the fact that we have the highest level of unemployment experienced in this nation for many years. Obviously, by objecting to the course of my remarks, the President of the Treasury Board indicates that the government has not thought clearly about this subject. It is my contention that this should be an aspect of government activity; in other words, efforts to control pollution can also be used as a means of finding employment. It could be done under this particular clause. We could save our environment and, at the same time, save our own people. I am sure no one on the government side would object to my advocating a program of this sort, even though the President of the Treasury Board did not seem to think that the application of the clause could have the effect I am suggesting.

As I was saying, large numbers of people are not included in the unemployment statistics though they are, in fact, unemployed. I have heard figures of—

**The Chairman:** I say to the hon. member, with respect, that I have listened to his explanation of the manner in which he proposes to relate his remarks to clause six. I gave him the benefit of the doubt because there was, I thought, some relationship, but I should like to say to the hon. member that we should not transgress too far upon such a thin thread of relevancy.

**Mr. Howard (Skeena):** I have great admiration and respect for your instructions as to how the rules should

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be applied, Mr. Chairman, but, with that respect, I suggest I have heard figures ranging between 75,000 and 100,000 people in connection with those who are undertaking retraining programs administered by the Department of Manpower. They are doing so in the hope that they will learn a new trade which will better fit them to become employed within the economic structure. What I am saying is that here is an area for worthwhile activity, namely, the training of our people to prepare them for work in pollution control where they may help to save our environment. With great respect, Mr. Chairman, I do not think this is any tenuous thread or that it is incompatible with the terms of clause six.

I refer to the clause again. It provides that the minister of the environment shall initiate, recommend and undertake programs relating to environmental quality or the control of pollution. In the course of doing so he is to co-operate with provincial governments, agencies or any bodies, organizations which have similar objects. This presents a clear opportunity for the government to do something worthwhile in the field of environmental control. It is in these circumstances that I referred to the numbers of people who are undertaking these manpower training programs, indicating, as an aside, that these people had been left out of the Minister of Labour's explanation of what was contained in the unemployment insurance statistics.

Let me tell the committee that we might well employ some of the native Indian people in this field. Many of them have a greater experience of the natural part of life than do a lot of the people who live in cities. After all, the streams, lakes and forests of our land are their environment. We could embark on an excellent program of environmental control by using people who are of Indian origin. Their cultural background fits them to understand environmental control easily. Moreover, there is, as hon. members know, an exceptionally high amount of unemployment among the Indian people. Let me put a statistic or two on the record. These statistics result from a survey of the native Indian population by the Department of Manpower and Immigration in the Pacific region for the fiscal year 1970-71—just last winter. The survey showed that in the Fraser Indian Agency, which covers the lower mainland and up into the Fraser River, New Westminster and that area, 19.3 per cent of the work force of Indian people was unemployed. This was one year ago. The government is talking in terms of a 6 per cent or 6.2 per cent average throughout the nation, yet one year ago unemployment in one Indian agency in British Columbia was three times that amount. On the west coast, I take it in the area represented in part by my hon. friend from Comox-Alberni, during the same winter 23 per cent of the Indian people in the Campbell River region were unemployed.

• (12:30 p.m.)

In the area represented by my hon. friend from Kamloops-Cariboo, in the Indian agencies of Kamloops, Nicola and Lytton in the central region of British