

cent in February to 10.8 per cent in March. For women, the unemployment rates have risen from 9.2 per cent in February to 10 per cent in March.

If we look at the seasonally adjusted statistics on the basis of sex, just to give the government a chance to see whether we are playing with statistics or revealing the social reality, we find that unemployment rates have risen to 9.5 per cent for women and to 8.7 per cent for men.

Mr. Heap: It is shameful, however you look at it.

Mr. Keeper: If one looks at the statistics today for regions which are hardest hit, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland, we find that real unemployment rates—that is, those rates which include people who have given up on the job market and have given up on government policy—range from 21.2 per cent in Quebec to a sky-high rate of 31 per cent in Newfoundland.

The fact is that real unemployment statistics today show that there are two million unemployed people in this country. This is reflected in all regions of the country, in all sub-groups, whether by age or by sex, and in all provinces. This is not a specialized phenomenon. This is not simply a matter of some opposition members playing with statistics. This is a true, tragic reflection of a social reality which, in large part, has been brought about by the insane, insensitive and stupid economic policies of this government.

As a result of the economic statistics which became available today, I took the opportunity to challenge the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen) in the House with regard to unemployment. I merely wanted to know from him just how high unemployment must go before the government recognizes the folly of its economic policies, changes those economic policies, and seeks to stimulate the economy so as to create jobs for all Canadians. His response was sad. He said that the question was rhetorical. He said, "We are doing everything within our power to assist." He gave specific examples. He mentioned the housing industry in which he claimed that the government was creating 40,000 jobs. He mentioned the use of the unemployment insurance fund, in which he once again claimed an equivalent number of jobs were being created. He mentioned the announcement of the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans (Mr. LeBlanc) that the government has created 25,000 to 40,000 jobs. If we are very generous with the government and accept those statistics as face value, we find a total of 120,000 jobs created, in the words of the Minister of Finance, at a time when the statistics clearly show that almost two million people are unemployed in this country. The response of the government is clearly inadequate and weak, and it simply does not meet the needs of Canadians.

The minister went on to say in his response, "We are doing everything possible within the means at our disposal to assist the unemployed in Canada." That was an interesting statement from the Minister of Finance and the chief economic architect of the Liberal government. Why on earth is he able to say, with almost two million people unemployed, that the government is doing all that it can when, using his own response, it has created 120,000 new jobs at the most? Why is he able to say that? Why does he believe that? I am sure that

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the minister is an honest man. I can only conclude that it relates to the way he sees the world and the economy, and his economic philosophy. I think that that economic philosophy was quite readily reflected in recent statements by the Governor of the Bank of Canada, Mr. Bouey. In the issue of *The Globe and Mail* dated April 7, 1982, Mr. Bouey's sentiments were expressed. The article quoted Mr. Bouey as saying that Canadians must be prepared to take a cut in living standards to combat unemployment, inflation and recession. Yesterday, Bank of Canada Governor Gerald Bouey said:

I am sometimes asked . . . how high does the rate of unemployment have to go, how many foreclosures have to occur, before the bank will give up its policy of monetary restraint.

His response was very much like the response given to me by the Minister of Finance. They will stick by their economic theories and philosophies. They refuse to do anything to help Canadian people when they need help and jobs. Why? It is because of the central economic philosophy, and the governor is quoted quite clearly in *The Globe and Mail*. In fact, he is quoted as having listed the following to be detriments to the creation of employment: government regulation, marketing boards and the minimum wage. He quotes these as being anti-market culprits. Therefore, what he is really saying is that he is a believer in the unregulated market and believes that the unregulated market will somehow create wealth and jobs for Canadians. That is clearly not working today. These are not the times for believers in economic theory. These are not the times for the Friedmans and Reaganites of the world, the people who, through some unexamined belief in an economic theory, continue to steer the ship of state into troubled waters and to abandon Canadians without care. They are operating on the basis of a belief in an economic theory rather than on the basis of social reality.

If only they would look at what is happening in the economy, if only they would look at what is happening to people and if only they would read the statistics produced by their own government departments which demonstrate the fact that unheard numbers of people are unemployed today, they would find that a change in economic policy is required in order to get those people back to work. They must re-examine their belief and take some pragmatic, caring action in order to meet the needs of Canadians. However, instead of a rational, humane, objective, openminded look at economic matters, what we get from this government is not only statements of philosophical commitment from the Minister of Finance, but the public relations exercises of the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Axworthy) as well. He has now become the front man for this Liberal government. What has he done as the front man? Quite simply, he goes around setting up smokescreens and he does this by holding press conferences every couple of weeks in which he announces some new "job creation" measures.

● (1640)

Mr. de Jong: He announces them every time.