

posed new levels of unemployment insurance benefits. There has been in recent days, as indeed there was today in this House, an implicit criticism of the increased amounts of federal money going to the province of Quebec.

It is important to note that all this criticism being heard in our country is not coming from the traditional conservative sources alone in Canada. It is not simply coming from the lawyers, doctors and professional people in general. It is now emerging from those who may appropriately be called the ordinary people of this country. Professionals and businessmen have always opposed the significant use of public capital, either to redistribute income or to create new public enterprises, and especially have they been critical of all forms of welfare assistance. However, it is a new phenomenon in Canada that significant numbers of ordinary people have joined in this criticism. We are now hearing criticism from miners, auto workers, loggers and farmers—in short, as I said, from the majority of the people of our country. I suggest this is a profoundly important development. It could lead to much more internal conflict and disunity in the country than the supposed forces of separatism within the province of Quebec could generate.

What is the reason for that, Mr. Speaker? Cynics like to say that the true selfishness of the average man in society is coming to the fore and being revealed at last. That is the reason behind this criticism, they think. I think that view is wrong. Ordinary people in Canada, as well as ordinary people elsewhere in the world, harbour a real concern about the well-being of their fellow countrymen. They are truly concerned and want to make sure that their fellow countrymen do not suffer. Average people do not resent some welfare burden and some education costs. What they resent, and resent increasingly in Canada, is the scale of that burden and the scale of those costs. They resent the fact that they work long and hard, yet must finance the tax rolls which are required to assist not a few but hundreds of thousands of their fellow countrymen.

Welfare costs, Mr. Speaker, are skyrocketing. Cities across the country from Vancouver to Halifax are experiencing increases in their welfare costs ranging anywhere between 100 per cent and 300 per cent. Education costs are increasing because of the large proportion of relatively young people in our population. Consequently, property taxes on homes often owned by working people have increased; certainly, the income taxes that such people pay are going up to pay for these needed expenditures. They are continuing to go up. As a consequence, disunity of serious proportions is a real possibility in this country. If unemployment is not reduced to the 3 per cent level very soon in Canada we could experience one of the greatest social crises in the history of our country. I do not say this in any loose fashion. Workers in Canada will be pitted against fellow workers. English-speaking Canadians will be pitted against French-speaking Canadians. I say this not in any "scary" fashion. I say this because I am concerned about the real consequences, social and political, of such a crisis which would affect

the unity of this country and the viability of a federal government.

Many speakers in debates during the past few months who have spoken from this side of the House and, particularly, who have been members of this party have made positive and general criticism of the government. They have suggested that its preoccupation with inflation is economically insane and socially irresponsible. I do not intend to repeat their arguments. I should like to suggest a couple of concrete steps which might be taken now to reduce unemployment levels in this country.

First, if this government is really concerned about unemployment, it could propose what might be called a housing charter for Canadians for the 1970's. It should make such a commitment now, saying that by the end of this decade no Canadian in any province of this country will be without adequate housing. By the end of this decade it should be the case that every Canadian will regard housing as he now regards secondary education. It should be the case that housing will become a social right, and a legitimate and real expectation, of every person in this country. A citizen should come to regard housing, in short, as he now regards secondary education. We look on secondary education as a matter of right; if there is an increasing need in education, all we do is expand our present facilities. We do not, I repeat, we do not permit any youngster in this country to do without secondary education. However, we now permit many of our citizens, indeed, they number in the millions, to do without adequate housing.

The government could make such a commitment. It would involve expenditures that are in the billions; I candidly concede that cost. This is not an Utopian scheme. I am not saying that within one or two years all the housing needs of our people should be overcome. I am saying that by the end of the decade the problem ought to be overcome. The government could consider both housing and unemployment and solve both problems.

What would be the effects of such a commitment on unemployment? First of all, the obvious effect would be that bricklayers, painters, carpenters, electricians, plumbers and all the unskilled workers involved in house building would be given work. The less obvious consequence is that steel, aluminum and plastic workers who make products which go into houses would find jobs. It would also affect truck drivers who deliver products and assembly workers in plants across the country involved in making prefabricated housing of all sorts. They would also find employment.

• (3:40 p.m.)

The third category, perhaps the least obvious beneficiaries, would be auto workers, store workers and owners of movie houses. In short, virtually every other category of worker in this country would benefit because his goods and services would be purchased as a result of people being employed in the building of houses. For a long time, economists have said that if you really want to employ people and get the maximum output in terms of men