

province in one year jumped one full percentage point, that is to 12.5 per cent of the total work force.

We are not proud of the fact that in New Brunswick the unemployment rate has remained fairly static at 13 per cent. Actually it went down .4 per cent during the year. It is certainly an unemployment rate from which the minister can take little comfort.

The unemployment rate in Atlantic Canada in comparison to that in the rest of Canada is unacceptable. This government should be condemned for its callous and uncaring attitude toward the difficulty Atlantic Canadians face in finding work.

The unemployment rate in Canada during the 12 month period of 1979 was 7.5 per cent, while in Atlantic Canada that rate was 11.7 per cent. Those are shameful figures. In 1978 Canada had an unemployment rate of 8.4 per cent. In the Atlantic region it was 12.5 per cent. The litany goes on and on. I could recite figure after figure, which would not be very encouraging to the people of Atlantic Canada, but suffice it to say that today, in 1981, the unemployment rate is still as intolerable as it has been in previous years. The government does nothing about it. The Department of Employment and Immigration does nothing about it. It is a disgraceful situation.

● (1740)

There have been no meaningful programs developed by the government. Let us not forget that this government has been in power since 1963, with the exception of a brief interlude. This government has to take responsibility for the fact that the country has been mismanaged and misgoverned. It is an economic calamity and an economic chaos that no economic development measures have been taken in Atlantic Canada, either in the short term or in the long term. There has been increasing inflation; we have seen unemployment skyrocket; Regional growth has stagnated to the point where it has ceased to exist. The difficulties in Atlantic Canada caused by inflation coupled with unemployment are just intolerable. What we require is some imagination. We require the government to implement programs which will be meaningful and create lasting jobs.

What do we get instead? We get makeshift programs which are meaningless. There is nothing of any substance. The hand-out attitude of this government toward Atlantic Canada obviously continues to be its solution to the problems of Atlantic Canada. The attitude of the government seems to be that DREE is there, that it will create part-time jobs, that the government will give Atlantic Canada equalization dollars and that that will make up for the 12.5 per cent unemployment rate which is being experienced in that area. However, that is not what Atlantic Canadians want. Atlantic Canadians want to contribute, as much as any other Canadian across this nation, to the future and to the economic stability of this country. We do not have those opportunities because this government has lacked initiative and imagination. We require the people who control departments, beginning with ministers and on down, to come up with proper policies which will create jobs and situations in which people will have the opportunity to

Unemployment

produce and be involved in the permanent work force. We require a policy which would provide basically full employment opportunities for Atlantic Canadians, or at least to the same extent as the rest of Canada has them. Obviously the minister's department is highly inefficient to the detriment of Atlantic Canadians. There is no basis on which we can pin our hopes for the future.

Various programs have been implemented. I refer, for example, to the educational programs to train people. I suppose that the fundamental idea behind them is good but they have not worked. It seems to me that the minister and his departmental officials do not really have any idea about what the programs themselves are supposed to be accomplishing.

I have received representation after representation from constituents who have experienced the frustrations of attempting to deal with the minister's department. They have attempted to enrol in some of the special programs and have been frustrated to the point where they just have not been able to fulfil their ambitions. There is a program in place called the vocational educational program. It is supposed to be assisted by the fee-pay scheme. It was created to try to draw people into the work force and to give them special training so that they can go out and train others, but in order for them to take advantage of this program they must be able to support themselves. What is happening in the meantime? People who are enrolling in these programs are finding that their applications, although acceptable to universities, are not acceptable to the Employment Insurance Commission. These people are extremely frustrated. I want hon. members to know that when people write to me and say things like "I am in a situation now where I am becoming a beggar in my own home," things are extremely serious.

I have documentation from various parts of Atlantic Canada and from various parts of my constituency which indicates that our young people, who so desperately need a foundation and a future in this country, are leaving the region literally in droves because there are no opportunities for them to upgrade their training or to better themselves so that they can qualify for jobs.

In my constituency there are the three small communities of Albert, Alma and Hillsborough. In one of them a young lady was looking for a job but was unable to find one. She was drawing unemployment insurance and trying to repay a student loan and another \$500 she had borrowed from the university. She said, "My unemployment insurance has just about run out, and I am getting desperate". That just typifies the attitude of young people in this nation who are having problems in obtaining employment, and there are hundreds of thousands of them. This young lady provided me with a list of 69 young people in those three little communities to which I have referred who have left the region to seek employment outside Atlantic Canada because of lack of opportunities there.

These are frustrations people experience, and as we sit in this House of Commons we have no idea of how frustrating it must be for people who are attempting to feed their families and educate their children but cannot find jobs.