

cuts, that it was in fact shifting the burden of the unemployed to a great extent to the municipalities in Ontario and to the province? If you have a large number of people who are unemployed, and they do not have unemployment insurance, there is no place else they can go to keep them alive but to the welfare system. The welfare system is financed in Ontario by the municipalities with the help of the province. Either the member did not know what he was voting for when he voted for Bill C-21 a few years ago or he did it and is now concealing the fact. The fact of the matter is that thousands of people who would have been eligible for unemployment insurance and covered by the federal program are not now covered by that federal program. Since we do not believe in letting people starve to death the only recourse for those people is to go to the municipalities.

• (1230)

I was on the committee that studied that bill. We went to Sudbury, Ottawa, and Toronto. Every municipality said: "Do not do that because you are going to increase our tax burden. You are going to put a big burden on us to take care of the unemployed".

I ask the hon. member how he can say that the policies of his government were not responsible for that enormous shift to those municipalities in Ontario for the unemployed? Nobody else can take care of them if they do not have unemployment insurance.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The hon. member has one minute to answer that question.

Mr. Soetens: Mr. Speaker, I could use the whole day.

The fact of the matter is that in the unemployment insurance scheme the higher the unemployment insurance rate in a particular region, the higher the benefit time available to individuals. Throughout Ontario there are tremendous programs through unemployment insurance. These include many training funds which help keep people off the welfare rolls.

It was not the federal government that increased the rate of payment to welfare recipients by 28 per cent. I should point out, contrary to what the member says, that it is the federal government that helps fund the program with 50 per cent of the dollars. It is the provincial government that spends it willy-nilly as though there are no controls required.

Supply

There is a substantial difference in outlook between me and the member. I guess I would take our approach as being a far more constructive approach to the issue of taxation in Ontario.

Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have this opportunity to speak to the motion of the hon. member for Scarborough—Rouge River. I commend him and his caucus for putting forward this motion.

The motion is:

That this House condemns the government for its negligence toward the worst social and economic difficulties faced by residents of Ontario in modern times.

We all know the signs of trouble in Ontario, as well as in other parts of this country. Some previous speakers have given some of the statistics on the matter. Some speakers following me from all sides will quote statistics. Therefore, I do not wish to go heavily into the statistics of the trouble signs. The main one is the increase in unemployed as a percentage to 11.2 per cent. This is one of the very highest rates that we have had in my lifetime since I was a boy during the Depression.

Worse than that, factories have been closed and even dismantled at twice the rate they were during the last recession in 1981-82. Those jobs are not going to return if good times—as they are called—return. They are gone. The factories are gone. They have been dismantled. There is a little bit of employment among some of my friends in the millwright union for dismantling factories, but it is not what they would rather do. They would rather be building factories.

In Toronto, on College Street where I live, there are homeless and there are beggars. People come to my office who have been quite demoralized by experiencing the downturn in the economy as it has affected them, their families and their friends.

We have seen a youth riot in Toronto. We have seen gang fights and general signs of considerably demoralized youth. This includes the drop-out rate in the high schools.

There are some things that can be done, even by the provincial government, which the Ontario government is trying to do. It has borrowed money to restart some jobs. For example, there is highway construction and the building of 20,000 units of non-profit housing. The president of local 183 told me a couple of weeks ago how