

Economic Policy

I recall a little mill in Jenpeg, Manitoba, which made Jenpeg logs. God knows, the people of the north need those Jenpeg logs to build their log houses. Then we saw government become involved with private enterprise. It was decided that the government of the province would operate the Jenpeg mill, and operate it better than private enterprise had done. So, the government of the province put one of its political appointees in charge. He hired 14 more people to do the work of five, and the whole operation was a disaster. It has gone down the drain. Taxation levels in Manitoba are the highest in Canada. Mr. Speaker, provincial taxes in Manitoba are higher than anywhere else in Canada.

● (2140)

That is why, for example, Saskatchewan is having some difficulties. They do not even audit their own books. The various departments were supposed to be audited. The premier of Saskatchewan stood up before the recent by-elections and said that the books had been audited. They were not audited at all. All of a sudden the premier of Saskatchewan comes up with egg all over his face, a not unusual circumstance for NDP'ers. He discovered that he had not audited his own books.

Let us go to the job opportunities created in British Columbia.

Mr. Symes: Tell us about Ocean Falls.

Mr. Brisco: I will get to that in a minute. Ocean Falls is an old pulp and paper mill on the west coast of British Columbia. The private enterpriser who owned that mill was not making a dime. In fact he was losing money. It would have cost a lot of money to make it work properly. The Barrett government took over and made it work. More power to them! I am quite prepared to hand out accolades where they are deserved. However, what is the comparison between one little pulp and paper mill on the west coast of British Columbia and the disaster wreaked upon British Columbia in the mining community? Thousands were thrown out of work as a result of the stupid policies of the NDP minister of mining, Leo Nimsick. He shut down the entire mining industry in British Columbia.

My constituency of Kootenay West is rich in mineral potential. Where is the development? It is gone. Where did the development in the east Kootenay's go? Where did the miners go? They went to Cape Breton, Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, all over the maritimes. That is where the mining companies went looking for ore. They went to the Territories and the Yukon. They knew darn well there was no point trying to find ore in British Columbia under the regressive taxation policies of the NDP government.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but his allotted time has expired. The hon. member may continue with unanimous consent.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

An hon. Member: No.

[Mr. Brisco.]

Mr. Brisco: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): Order, please. I distinctly heard a no. The hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie (Mr. Symes).

Mr. Cyril Symes (Sault Ste. Marie): Mr. Speaker, in this debate on the state of the economy I would like, in the few minutes remaining, to focus on the problem of unemployment. As most Canadians know, under the present Liberal government we now have the worst unemployment since the great depression of the thirties, with over one million Canadians unemployed and only about 37,800 job vacancies. We know that about 13 per cent of the labour force is without jobs. These figures do not include the ones that go unreported by Statistics Canada.

What are the characteristics of unemployment today? I would like to zero in on that. Unemployment among women is higher than among men. We find today that women account for about 40 per cent of the total labour force in Canada, or about four million jobs. Women make up about 40 per cent of the unemployed today.

We find also that unemployment is disproportionately concentrated among young people, with 46 per cent of the unemployed in Canada under 25 years of age.

Unemployment is much higher in certain regions in Canada, especially in Atlantic Canada, Quebec, northern Ontario, and areas in northern British Columbia.

On past occasions I dealt with the problem of unemployment, its causes and solutions. Today I would like to zero in on the problem of unemployment among women and young people. It is sad to relate that women are the lowest paid and usually the first laid off in times of economic difficulty. They face discrimination in job availability. They often get less pay for the same job than a man would get.

Job opportunities are limited for women, especially in my area of the country, northern Ontario, where they find work mostly in the service industries in jobs such as waitresses, clerks, secretaries or nurses.

Many women today do not want to have a role solely as a homemaker. They want to branch out toward a fulfilling career. Times have changes as have attitudes and, of course, the educational qualifications of women.

We find as well that women with their skills are carrying out jobs that help keep the economy functioning, jobs which provide important services to people.

I would like to put to rest the myth which is perpetuated by some, including the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Cullen), that women in the work force are a luxury rather than a necessity, that somehow high unemployment among women can be tolerated because they are not really the breadwinner of the family and that the family can get along quite nicely without their income.

The fact is that about 43 per cent of women who work do not do so primarily because they want to pursue careers. They