

Supply—Labour

a man who is unemployed in a certain municipality, although it may be only two miles from an adjacent municipality, cannot register for work and be employed on a winter works project in that adjacent municipality. We have across the country a lot of wealthy and progressive cities. These cities can take advantage of this legislation. They are able to go to a bank to raise the money necessary to participate. However, smaller communities or the suburbs of industrial areas, where unfortunately many of the lay-offs occur, are unable to participate in the program. We do not get any lay-offs in Rockcliffe Park, Ottawa. The lay-offs occur in the suburbs where the tradesmen and unskilled labourers reside and own their homes.

If I may get closer to home, I should like to mention the town of Dieppe, which is two miles from Moncton. It has been impossible for that town to bring out a program it could afford. Citizens of the town of Dieppe who have been laid off are not, therefore, eligible to register for work on programs that might be undertaken in the municipalities of Westmorland. I believe that is one thing the minister should correct as soon as possible.

There has been a lot of discussion today about what the federal government might do to eliminate this increasing number of unemployed. The federal government has done a great deal already. We have witnessed in the last three years continual deficits. At no time, before, except in case of war, has the government of Canada ever spent hundreds of millions of dollars on public works. I know that in the maritime provinces pensions have increased, as they have across the country. We have had special assistance in the form of the Atlantic provinces adjustments grant. These are things which have made it possible for the maritimes, and for New Brunswick in particular, to be able to state today that 95 per cent of the people registered for work are in receipt of unemployment insurance benefits. In the past many people were always unemployed; today the seasonal workman, although unemployed, in most cases, has sufficient stamps at the present time to carry him through.

Another report of some interest to myself is the dominion bureau of statistics bulletin of February 11. The headline is, "Building permits issued in December", and I think it is important that we in the maritimes realize what the article says. I quote: "December values were lower than a year earlier for all provinces except Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Manitoba". There is evidence that these three provinces, three provinces which recently elected Conservative governments, are the only three provinces in

Canada that can show an increase in building permits for December last. For example, in New Brunswick for the month of December, 1958, \$339,000 was spent. In New Brunswick for the month of December 1959, the figure is \$1,335,000, an increase of over 400 per cent. National housing is the same way.

The city of Moncton is included in the dominion bureau of statistics statement of February 4, and it shows that in that city between January 1 and December 31 1959 there were 430 new starts. That figure represents nearly one half of the C.M.H.C. new starts in the whole province of New Brunswick. Conversely it represents an increase of over 50 per cent over the preceding year, and as of December 31 last there were 302 houses under construction in Moncton, a 50 per cent increase over the exact date of the preceding year.

Therefore, I think it is wrong for hon. members, especially those from the maritimes, to get up in the House of Commons and say that we still have a terrible living standard. It is only right for me to say that conditions are much better than they have ever been before, and are getting better daily, when one realizes that nearly one half of the housing starts in a period of one year have doubled and that 95 per cent of the people claiming benefits are getting them because they have a stockpile of insurance stamps.

One problem we are faced with is the need to make it possible for the provincial governments to have larger budgets, to make it possible for the municipal governments to have larger budgets, in order that they will then be in the position to take advantage of matching grants. The same thing applies with the trans-Canada highway as it does with roads to resources and the winter works program. It is very difficult, sometimes impossible, for the smaller municipalities and the smaller provinces to say to the government, "We welcome your aid", because it is impossible for them to match the grants.

In conclusion, I want to state that the figure of \$15 million is, in my opinion, high enough under the existing formula. It is probably impossible for the municipalities of Canada to take advantage of all of this \$15 million, and I understand that last year there was a surplus or credit in the fund. I hope the day will soon come when the Minister of Labour in his wisdom will increase this amount, keep doubling it, and I also hope that at that time the matching grants will be acceptable or the formula will be changed whereby smaller municipalities or smaller provinces will be able to request a better than 50 per cent share, especially in view of the fact that the share is now confined to wages. If it were possible for the federal