

Employment Programs

force unemployed this winter. In other words, the Prime Minister is in power at a time when there will be more unemployed Canadians than at any previous time in history, hardly a commendable record for one who is supposed to be a progressive politician. As the hon. member for York South (Mr. Lewis) and the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) have indicated, unemployment is not simply a statistic; it means gross human deprivation for the men and women directly involved, and also certainly for their children. Something has to be done to remedy the situation.

Closely related to unemployment are welfare costs in the cities. I am informed that the city of Montreal is now spending \$68 million a year on welfare. Toronto has exceeded its present annual welfare budget by \$22 million. This year Edmonton has exceeded its budget by some \$350,000. My own city of Oshawa, a much smaller community than the other metropolitan areas, has exceeded its welfare budget for this year by some 280 per cent, and this in a relatively prosperous part of the country.

As everyone knows, the federal government involves itself in many ways in urban affairs. Most of the unemployed in Canada live in our cities. The government could take action in many areas, such as communications, housing, transportation, postal services, pollution control and so on, which could stand an infusion of public capital.

I do not want to exaggerate the benefits that would accrue from such an infusion, for it would take time for the effect of such investment to pay off in full employment. But it would be paying off by next February, when the forecast is that we will have the highest level of unemployment this winter. I suggest a conference should be held soon between the federal government, the provincial governments and representatives of our major municipalities to make clear that unemployment is a serious issue.

Certainly I think there is need to do something about housing and urban renewal, both for its own sake and for the spin-off effect this would have on the whole economy. About 80,000 people today in metropolitan Toronto alone are on the public housing lists, a figure that exceeds the population of my own city. Yet the government spends a sum total of 3 per cent of its housing money in the public housing field. It is the poor people of the country who are waiting for public housing, yet 97 per cent of government funds for housing go into other sectors that need less help.

I have recited a number of areas in which the government could spend money beneficially, and housing as I say, is one of them. It is an area in which the government should spend even more money, after consultation with provincial and municipal governments.

Another step that should be taken immediately at the federal level is to increase the rate of unemployment insurance. This has already been suggested. If this action were taken now, thousands of people who will be unemployed this winter would receive help. In addition, the

[Mr. Broadbent.]

time for which unemployed people are able to collect benefits should be extended. In general terms, the government must also begin now to rid itself of its old ad hoc monetary and fiscal policy approach and to indulge in serious economic planning which is aimed at full employment. The government must get away from its preoccupation—and I emphasize that word—with price stability. Stable prices are important, but weighed against the priority of full employment that must take second place, as indeed is the case in all advanced countries of western Europe.

I want to speak briefly about the issue of Quebec. According to the most recent figures, 45 per cent of the unemployed of this country are between the ages of 14 and 24. In terms of what is taking place in the province of Quebec, I suggest this is a serious condition. Those who become involved in radical politics, whether of the FLQ variety or the democratic sort associated with the Parti Quebecois, tend overwhelmingly to be in that age group. This group consists of a curious mixture. On the one hand, there is the highly educated, young university student radical; on the other hand, there is the very poorly educated young person, for example, the taxi driver in Montreal. This is not a coincidence. What we are witnessing now in Quebec is a common phenomenon around the world, that is the young radical student discussing issues from his, in the case of the FLQ, terrorist point of view with the young unemployed worker. He attempts to "radicalize" the young worker.

What needs to be done, and done right away, is to solve the unemployment question, particularly among the young people of the province of Quebec. A study undertaken shortly after the last election in that province showed that some 50 per cent of the workers who lived in the east end of Montreal and voted for the Parti Quebecois did so not for separatist reasons at all but because they wanted social and economic reform. If we want to repair the damage that, in my view, has been done by the Prime Minister in recent weeks, we must reach these young workers of Quebec and provide jobs for them as soon as possible. Then and only then, in my view, will we have a chance of keeping Quebec in Canada.

At the same time, we must give a greater sense of participation to the young student who is not economically deprived, both within his own province and within Canada as a whole. It seems to me it is primarily this lack of opportunity within the country as a whole that has led to his decision to opt out of Canada. To deal with this kind of young person in Quebec, we will require much more sophisticated approaches than merely economic ones, though I do not have time to elaborate on this. Nevertheless, I cannot emphasize too much the need for something to be done about the young unemployed workers of the province of Quebec if we are to prevent Quebec from separating from the rest of Canada. Without their support separatist students would get nowhere.

● (4:40 p.m.)

In this regard, and this will be my concluding point, it seems to me once again that the federal government,