

Economic Policy

indifferent to the human and economic consequences of one million people being unemployed.

The figures are alarming and disturbing. They ought to concern the some 90 per cent of Canadians who have jobs. The official rate is now 9.1 per cent, with 932,000 unemployed. We know that the real rate is much higher and that the real number is much greater. If we add to the official figures produced by the government all those Canadians who would willingly take a job in this country, instead of 932,000 Canadians unemployed in 1977—not 1937—the figure would be 1.479 million. There would be a real rate of unemployment in February, 1977, of 13.7 per cent instead of the official figure of 9.1 per cent.

In a civilized industrial country some 40 years after the great depression that is a scandalous situation. Eight of the ten provinces have double digit inflation as well as double digit unemployment. If we look at the real figures—not the official government data—eight of our ten provinces have double digit unemployment. In Newfoundland the figure is 31.8 per cent. These are February figures, and I have added to the official data those people who in the view of my party ought to be included in the monthly data, namely, those who would be in the labour market if jobs were available.

Based on that, we get the following figures for Canada in 1977: Newfoundland, 31.8 per cent; Prince Edward Island, 25.9 per cent; Nova Scotia, 20.1 per cent; New Brunswick, 25.7 per cent, Quebec 16.6 per cent; Ontario, 11.4 per cent, Manitoba, 11.3 per cent; British Columbia, 13.4 per cent. Even in the two provinces where unemployment is not in the double digit category, what do we have? In Saskatchewan the figure is 9.2 per cent, and in the best of the lot, in Alberta, the figure is 7.3 per cent. It was not many years ago that even Liberals talked about 3 per cent unemployment being a serious objective for an industrial society and a target we should aim for in terms of job creation.

Fortunately, the economy of the province of Alberta has been stimulated because of the international oil situation, but it still has an unemployment rate of 7.3 per cent. I repeat that this is a scandalous situation in both human and economic terms. It should cause the government to express concern and to come forward and say, "We are trying to do (a), (b), (c) and (d), and perhaps over four years we will reduce the level significantly." I do not expect that to happen tomorrow, but the government should come forward with a program which will do something over a period of three or four years. But do we get those expressions of concern? Not at all. We get the flippancy of the Prime Minister who says we are living beyond our means. Like fun! Today the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) made reference to farmers spending their time in Florida, or California; I do not remember which.

An hon. Member: Hawaii.

Mr. Broadbent: The minister should tell that to farmers whose incomes are going down at the rate of 30 per cent per year. He should tell that to the one million Canadians who are unemployed. That is the kind of attitude this government

[Mr. Broadbent.]

has—and this is the government which has control of our fate. God protect us! If the general picture is bad from region to region and from province to province, it is particularly bad for the young people of Canada. Almost half of those unemployed are between the ages of 15 and 24. In another two months there will be several hundred thousand young people leaving our schools and universities to go on to the job market. It will be the worst job market since the depression. Many of these young people want to stay in the job market. They are willing to work and contribute to the well-being of their families and communities. But jobs are not available, they will not be available and, reluctantly, many young people will go back to school. They will be doing so reluctantly, because returning to school is not their wish. At this stage they do not want to further their education, but because there are no jobs from coast to coast they will return to school.

The situation is serious and it is particularly serious in the province of Quebec. To use a phrase of the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark), we indeed have a real time-bomb. Unemployment is at catastrophic levels among the young people of that province. It is no coincidence that young French Canadians in Quebec voted overwhelmingly for the Parti Québécois. The survey of the attitude in the province of Quebec which came out a few days ago shows that there has been a doubling of support for separatism since the election of the Trudeau government. I suggest that the young people of the province of Quebec are contributing to the increase in the commitment to have an independent province of Quebec. Surely that, if not humanitarian considerations, should bother this government.

We have had a number of debates on the subject of unemployment in the House since last September when my party first said that this should be recognized by the government as the leading political and economic question in this country. That has been carefully and benignly ignored by the government. At various times, on behalf of my colleagues, I have suggested what ought to be done both in the short run and in the long run. Today I will wait until near the end of my speech to repeat some of those suggestions, if time permits.

However, what I would really like to do this afternoon is report to the House and to the people of Canada on a three day visit my colleagues and I had in the province of British Columbia this past weekend. Four of us went to the province of British Columbia, for two reasons. We wanted to learn directly from people who are unemployed what it means to be unemployed in Canada in 1977, and how it affects their lives and the lives of their families. Second, we wanted to learn from the people who were experiencing this unemployment if they had some suggestions to make, because it is my serious view that the bureaucrats, the ministers and, indeed, the leaders of political parties on this side of the House all too often assume that we know the right generalizations, we know the broad framework of economic analysis and therefore we do not have to learn on the spot from ordinary people their proposals about what to do with their particular circumstances. It has been one of the things I have learned as a