

Unemployment

and in areas where the private sector is either contracting or is unable to expand rapidly enough to keep unemployment rates at an acceptably low level. The funding levels cannot themselves illustrate the second main purpose of job creation programming namely, to utilize the skills and energy of the unemployed to produce goods and services of benefit to the community at large.

Direct job creation is a quicker, more effective and less inflationary policy instrument for intervention on the demand side of the labour market than tax cuts, increased general government expenditure, or increased transfer payments.

A recent OECD study of direct job-creation programming in a number of countries, including Canada, gives positive recognition to this country's ability to create needed employment in a targeted and relatively inexpensive manner which responds to needs at the community level. The study estimated the program's net cost at between one half and two thirds of its gross cost. As noted by OECD, the relatively low wage levels do not contribute to upward pressure on wages generally and thus have little or no inflationary impact in times of economic slack. Because of their flexibility, they can be targeted on individuals and areas which benefit least, or not at all, from more traditional measures.

A key aspect of the evolution of direct job creation programming has been focused on sponsorship of projects by responsible organizations and the establishment of clear federal priority areas of activity.

● (1730)

I direct my final statements to current job creation programs which are providing in excess of 50 jobs for the young people in my riding. I think this is an innovation which is good not only for the community but for the country at large. I should hope that all hon. members will be very diligent in making sure that the young people who are employed under these projects this summer in their areas will have the opportunity to develop those skills needed to fill the jobs they will no doubt be filling in the future.

Mr. Bob Corbett (Fundy-Royal): Mr. Speaker, I wish to express my appreciation for the opportunity this afternoon of taking part in the debate on this opposition motion. It involves a topic which is extremely critical in Canada today. It involves a matter with which members and others in areas directly responsible for the economic interests of our country should be concerned.

The motion states in part:

That this House expresses its sorrow and sympathy for the more than one million Canadians who are unable to find work and who, with their families, face an uncertain future—

The fact of the matter is, those words are only too true. The future of those Canadians certainly is, at the very best, uncertain. We all must feel compassion and we should be expressing our sorrow and sympathy to those people who would be in the work force if they just had the opportunity of finding employ-

ment in this country, employment denied to over one million employable Canadians.

These Canadians want more than our sympathy and sorrow. They expect more and, in my opinion, they should receive more. These people want the consideration of the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Axworthy). They want the consideration and affection of the people who work in his department. They expect members of this House of Commons, their elected representatives, to address themselves to the plight they are currently facing; the difficulties they are having in providing a living for their families, education for their children and in coping with day to day inflation, higher food costs, higher energy costs and higher clothing costs. Most of them seem to think, and rightfully so, that the present minister and his government are certainly not addressing themselves to these problems.

As a member from Atlantic Canada, I intend to deal specifically with the problems being faced by the people of that area. I intend to deal with the tremendous difficulty they are experiencing in trying to find places for themselves in the work force. On a per capita basis, Atlantic Canadians experience one of the highest unemployment rates in Canada. It is my opinion and the opinion of many other Canadians that this intolerable situation should not be allowed to exist; that it is a situation which, indeed, need not exist.

Let me just give you some background statistics which indicate the real current difficulties in Atlantic Canada. My comparison will be made in respect of unemployment in March 1980 and March 1981. Realistically speaking, we have to work with the unadjusted estimates because they more closely and clearly reflect the true unemployment picture in Atlantic Canada.

In March of 1980 the unemployment rate in Newfoundland was an astounding 15.7 per cent. In March of 1981, after all the efforts of this minister and this government which, they maintain, they have expended to assist employment in this country, that rate dropped only .3 per cent to an unacceptable figure of 15.4 per cent. That indicates just how ineffectual are these programs which have been developed by the minister and this government.

The unemployment situation in Prince Edward Island is also appalling. In March of 1980 the rate was 13.4 per cent. Can you imagine an astounding unemployment rate of 13.4 per cent on an island with such a small population? Just one year later, unemployment in Prince Edward Island had increased by 2.6 per cent to an incredible 16 per cent rate. In spite of all the successful programs and efforts this government and the minister maintain they have made and have implemented to the benefit of Canadians, the unemployment rate in Prince Edward Island rose by 2.6 per cent to an intolerable 16 per cent rate in just one year.

Nova Scotia is one of the more fortunate Atlantic provinces. It is vocally and ably represented in this House by several members of the government party. Despite the fact that the government has several members in its party representing Nova Scotians in this House, the unemployment rate in that