

Canadians who will graduate from universities this year. The same holds true in the case of craftsmen and skilled workers in the manufacturing, construction and processing sector of industry. We are trailing change in our efforts to help those who want to give work and those who want to find work. We must ensure that our national labour force is equipped to meet changes in the demand for their services.

Something of this problem may be seen in the figures supplied in the 1968 report of the Economic Council of Canada. There it is stated that in 1946, 60 per cent of the workers were employed in goods producing industries and 40 per cent were employed in service industries. Twenty years later, in 1966, these figures had been reversed. Forty per cent were employed in industries producing goods and 60 per cent in service industries. This is the problem which I hope the government will be able to appreciate and in respect of which I hope it will be able to come forward with the necessary solutions. In the same period, the old reliable primary industries accounted for a smaller and smaller percentage of the labour force. Agriculture went down from 24.8 per cent to 7.4 per cent and forestry and fishing went down from 2.3 per cent to 1.4 per cent. This is the key to our problem.

This acceleration of employment in service industries is an international experience, but is far more pronounced in Canada than elsewhere. Also, it is more significant because in Canada the labour force is growing at a rate far ahead of that of any other western nation and will continue to do so beyond 1980. I am concerned about the effect this will have in terms of the population in the 1980's. This is why we must all be concerned. We need policies, we need direction and we need leadership. This must come from that side of the house which was given that great mandate, and which they think is the be-all and the end-all. If they do not take advantage of this mandate in terms of solving the basic problems, then I believe they know what the answer will be. I notice that the minister looks at you, Mr. Speaker, with some concern. This is the name of the game; if you do not produce you are out.

Mr. Benson: You fellows have had a lot of experience.

Mr. Alexander: I shall not take too much more time, but in conclusion I should like to say that these are basic national problems. I

Alleged Failure to Reduce Unemployment

wish to emphasize the desperate need for government action not only to overcome unemployment but to ensure future employment. We have been told in the past 15 minutes or so that this is the most pressing of the national tasks facing this government. Let us hope that within the very near future we will see some sign that the government appreciates this situation and intends to act. I do not mean "soon" in the sense the government uses that word. I mean tomorrow, if they have that ability. I hope the government appreciates the situation. I do not want to be nasty, but I am concerned. Let us have some policies from this government. Let us have some intentions and then I can truthfully perhaps believe in the just society. If we do not have some of these things, Mr. Speaker, we are lost.

● (9:10 p.m.)

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, when I read the wording of the motion "That this house regrets that the government is not presenting programs to achieve a rate of economic growth which will reduce unemployment and also insure that the economy will be able to absorb the large number of new entrants into the labour force this year", and the wording of the amendment which added the words "and that, instead, the government has slowed down public investment and has pursued fiscal and monetary policies deliberately designed to increase unemployment", I found them both interesting and provocative. They led me to think that the opposition benches would put forward a serious discussion of the basic economic issues facing the country, and especially some ideas of alternative policies which would clarify their real position. I regret, and I am disappointed, that nothing like this has been forthcoming in this debate.

Instead, all we have had has been a catalogue of platitudes from the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield), which does nothing more than establish that he is for economic as well as moral virtue. One could never have any doubt about the hon. member in respect of the latter, but it is also good to have reassurance that he also stands for the former, even if he is lacking in new ideas and proposals in spite of his vastly expanded staff. On the other hand, from the far right, and I speak politically when I talk about the right corner of this house, the routine folklore of the economic bogeyman hiding under everyone's bed has come forth; the familiar economic superstition which haunts every