

Employment Programs

impossible, to get any prediction from government sources. Predictions from individual sources have indicated unemployment running up to 9 per cent, not seasonably adjusted but 9 per cent in terms of actual unemployment.

The figures for October are by no means reassuring. The hon. member for York South (Mr. Lewis) has already called attention to the percentage of the, 419,000 persons out of work during that month who are under the age of 24, and the bitterness and disillusionment which this must be causing. It is clear also that the percentage of unemployment which might be considered long term unemployment, that is persons who have been unemployed for several months, is substantially on the increase. At the end of September, for example, there were 390,000 claimants for unemployment insurance benefits as compared with 260,000 at that time in the previous year. This is the result, in part, of increased unemployment and, in part, the fact that those who were unemployed this year remained unemployed for a longer period of time than was the case a year ago.

Let us compare the figures for August, September and October of this year to the figures for the same period in 1961, when later on in the year there was approximately 9 per cent unemployment. We find for the month of October, 1961, the actual rate was 4.8 per cent whereas this year it is 5 per cent. In 1961, the seasonally adjusted rate was 6.5 per cent whereas this year it is 6.6 per cent. There is every indication, therefore, of a tough winter. It is going to be especially bad in some regions.

• (3:30 p.m.)

We must understand that while we should be particularly concerned about regions which are exceptionally hard hit, unemployment is a problem across the country. I believe in the great province of Ontario, for example, there are, according to these October figures, some 108,000 persons out of work or about 25 per cent of the total unemployed. So, we should not think of this as simply a regional problem, although we have to be concerned about the effect in some regions of the country. We are confronted with the prospect of an unemployment rate which will be dangerously high during this coming winter. Even the term "mass unemployment" should be used with care because it might lead us to think in terms of masses and statistics rather than in terms of the individual and the social reality of this kind of unemployment. Unemployment is not a statistic. It is degrading and represents a loss of dignity and self-respect in the individual.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Stanfield: It is a disaster for the family and, incidentally, is also a blow to the economy. This is what this government seems to fail to understand. Surely, it is obvious that mass unemployment leads to stagnancy, leads to market loss, cuts, the demand, leads to a need to cut costs and hence more unemployment. It is a vicious circle, in addition to the terrible losses from the point of view of the individual. Today, in this discussion, we can

[Mr. Stanfield.]

only focus our attention on what we can do and recommend.

I should like to spend a minute or two, first of all, in considering what has brought on the situation as described by the hon. member for York South (Mr. Lewis) and others. It is of course a consequence of the deliberate slow-down brought on by the government as part of its fight against inflation. I am pleased to see that recent figures indicate the cost of living is flattening out. I am pleased to see this, although it remains to be seen whether it represents much success in respect of the root causes of inflation. For example, I question very much whether there is as close a connection between unemployment and the control of inflation as this government appears to believe.

Certainly, I repeat that the deliberate slow-down of the economy and the resulting creation of substantial or mass unemployment is an inhuman way to fight inflation. We are seeing some of the consequences of this inhumanity this year. The government has accepted unemployment much too casually. This can be seen in the complacency which was evident of the Speech from the Throne. One would have great difficulty in relating what the Governor General was talking about to the same country in which we live if one were to read the Speech from the Throne now. A few days ago, when questioned about what more the government would do to fight unemployment, the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) said that it would do more if it proved to be necessary. What proof does the Prime Minister require that more is necessary? What more proof is required than what has been forthcoming? Independent people who have no axe to grind forecast that three-quarters of a million Canadians will be out of work. Let me emphasize—and I have to put this interpretation on events because I cannot believe the government is completely callous—that the economic forecasting of this government must simply be deplorable. That is the only way I could explain what has happened unless I were to draw the conclusion that the government simply does not care and I do not choose to do that.

When one contrasts the kind of forecasts made by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson) in his spring budget, for example, with what is actually the outlook today, and when one contrasts what we now know is the real thing as compared to the kind of complacency that exuded from the Speech from the Throne, surely there can no longer be any doubt that the Economic Council of Canada was absolutely correct in insisting for a number of years that the government should take part in establishing an independent short-term forecasting unit. If the government had not been so stubborn, and had taken this advice of the Economic Council, the government might have been prevented from taking this horrible road which will cause the Canadian people so much suffering this year. Let us have no more of this kind of forecasting which leads to the kind of emergency we are talking about here today.

There is, of course, a short-term problem we are facing now and a longer-term problem, both of which are quite severe. I am not prepared to admit that nothing can be