

Unemployment

conomic development program in respect of which we have received close to 80 applications from across this country. This is a way of providing long-term employment, working with community corporations in low employment areas.

If the hon. member wants to know what we are doing, those are the kind of efforts we are making. We still believe more can be done. That is one reason we have a parliamentary task force, and why in a matter of a very few short weeks we will be tabling in this House and presenting to Parliament the findings of the reviews we have been undertaking in our own department in respect of unemployment insurance and labour markets. In this way we can provide a further new direction which can be debated in this House, by labour and by business, in order to establish a different approach to employment, training efforts and initiatives for the decade of the 1980s.

I think we are trying to make an effort to respond to the changing composition of the work force and of unemployment. We are doing it in the context of what is real, what is practical and what is effective, not what is purely rhetorical and irrelevant.

Mr. John McDermid (Brampton-Georgetown): Mr. Speaker, we have been treated this afternoon to three entirely different speeches. We have just finished listening to the hon. minister of hoodwinking. I guess I am one of those terribly cruel, uncaring Progressive Conservatives who does not care for the little people or the unemployed, who wants to see them unemployed. That is a complete and utter falsehood which he travels around the country spreading. I want it to be known right now that this kind of nonsense will not be swallowed by the people of Canada. The people of Canada are too smart to accept that kind of gobbledygook.

The minister went on to say how cruel our budget was. The National Welfare Council said it was the fairest budget it had seen for the poor people in Canada. The Canadian people will not accept the minister's nonsense, and I want to tell him that the Progressive Conservative Party does not run Canada down. We like to build it up. We are a party of builders. For him to stand and say we do nothing but run it down is utter nonsense; and he should know better than to stand in this House and spread that sort of nonsense in the hope that the Canadian people will accept it from him.

Let me read a motion that was presented to this House. It reads:

That this House deplores the complete inaction of the government, after six months in office, with regard to the creation of jobs, regrets the inhumane cutbacks in the Canada Works program that have eliminated hundreds of communities across Canada that have been suffering from high levels of unemployment and condemns the government for its failure to date to bring forward a comprehensive employment strategy for the coming year.

That might sound like a Progressive Conservative motion, but it was not. It was one brought forward some time ago by a well known Liberal, I think the Secretary of State and Minister of Communications (Mr. Fox). At that time he was condemning the government for a number of things. Let us see what he is recorded as having said in *Hansard* last December. He was extremely critical of the government at that particular

time for inaction on programs. Yet the amazing thing is that the statistics he brought out showed that the unemployment rate would go from 11 per cent to 11.4 per cent by the year 1981. Indeed this is a novel way of looking at job creation in this country. The unemployment rate, as we now know, is well over 12 per cent. This minister is not saying anything about that today.

The hon. member for Longueuil (Mr. Olivier) said on December 6, 1979, during the same debate:

Mr. Speaker, in an affluent society such as this, suggestions that a 7 per cent or 8 per cent unemployment rate is acceptable are simply shameful.

● (1620)

I have to agree. The figure is up to 11 per cent or 12 per cent. I believe he is the chairman of the Quebec caucus. Where is he now? Why is he not standing up and being heard by the Canadian people? Where is he? Why is he not condemning the government for its inaction?

I take umbrage at what the minister has been saying. He has been going around saying 130,000 jobs would have been lost if the energy policy of the Progressive Conservative Party had been implemented. Yet I find that the province of Ontario is losing jobs every day because of inaction in the energy field. People are being laid off because they are not getting the contracts from out west which they should be getting. Those contracts would be going to Canadian companies. Canada's potential is unlimited and phenomenal. I have travelled, and I find that the only country which comes close to Canada is Brazil. Brazil has a great future. It has resources and people, and so does Canada.

The problem of the shortage of skilled labour should have been addressed years ago. Instead of training Canadians to do Canadian jobs, this government has seen fit to bring skills in and not train our own young people. Today the statistics on unemployment among young people are shameful. Among young people aged 15 to 24 there are 452,000 unemployed. A year ago 439,000 were unemployed. The figure is up 3 per cent. Unemployment among men in the 15-year to 24-year age group is up 4.2 per cent, and among women it is up 1.1 per cent. Those percentages may not sound extremely high, but if we look at our population as a whole, we can see that the problem is getting much worse, not better.

Among people in the 15 to 19 age group, 7,000 more are unemployed. This means that young people coming into the work force—about whom the minister brags all the time—are in fact not getting jobs. They are not getting the meaningful jobs they should be getting. A report by Statistics Canada recently said that 25 per cent of the young people who are getting jobs are under-employed. The ministry is forecasting 13 per cent to 14 per cent unemployment among young people this summer. That is completely unacceptable.

The minister talks about his various programs. I like to call them make-work projects. There is nothing permanent about them. In my community over the winter the Canada Works program provided 12¼ jobs. They were not permanent jobs; they will last perhaps 40 to 50 weeks, but no more. These are