

Inquiries of the Ministry

publication of Dominion Bureau of Statistics, unemployment in January reached 8 per cent, involving a total of 668,000 Canadians?

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I have dealt with this matter very often. I have indicated that we believe that the steps we have taken will have an effect upon the economy. I have said that there would be higher unemployment this month, as is always the case in January, but that, seasonably adjusted, the rate would go down. This is quite contrary to what my hon. friend has said, as reported in the *Globe and Mail* on February 1—

Some hon. Members: Order!

Mr. Benson:—that unless the government took further steps it would not go below 6.6 per cent. I wonder whether he would now like to withdraw that statement.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Minister of Finance whether or not he is prepared to revise his program, particularly in view of the fact that the increase in unemployment between December and January amounted, according to Dominion Bureau of Statistics, to some 130,000 Canadians, as opposed to the minister's own forecast of what he called a normal increase of some 100,000 persons between the months of December and January?

Mr. Benson: Mr. Speaker, if my hon. friend would look at the seasonally adjusted change the figure is 109,000.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, again I would ask my hon. friend whether, in view of the fact that his own forecast of the increase in unemployment between December and January has been exceeded by some 30 per cent and amounts to a figure of 130,000 Canadians, whereas a year ago the increase between December and January was 102,000 and the year before that 94,000, he could explain to the House or to anybody else how he finds any seasonally adjusted improvement in these figures?

Mr. Benson: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

UNEMPLOYMENT INCREASE—AMENDMENT OF UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT TO BROADEN ELIGIBILITY FOR BENEFITS

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Finance, if I can persuade him to stop playing the numbers game and deal with the unemployed. As the number of unemployed who have been out of work for six months or more has increased by 100 per cent this January compared with last January, from 54,000 to 108,000, is the government prepared to bring in immediate legislation to extend the eligibility period for those who have already exceeded it and thus enable them to receive payment and so that the younger people who have not acquired sufficient stamps to be eligible may be brought under the benefits of the Unemployment Insurance Act?

[Mr. Stanfield.]

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, this is, of course, a matter for the consideration of the Minister of Labour who looks after unemployment insurance. With the assistance of the House we would hope to have new unemployment insurance legislation very quickly. In addition, we have already increased benefits, as my hon. friend knows, in the December budget for those on unemployment insurance.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, in view of the fact that the increase in benefits was only 10 per cent and the white paper proposes raising the benefits much higher, is the minister prepared to give any consideration to the 277,000 unemployed under 25 years of age, many of whom cannot qualify for unemployment insurance, who are debarred from the manpower training allowances because they have not had three years in the labour force, and cannot get welfare because—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Perhaps it might be assumed that the hon. member has asked a question. If he has further questions to ask he might put them in the form of supplementaries.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, perhaps I might complete the question I was asking. Many of these young people cannot receive welfare as they have not established residence. Does the government propose to take any measures either by way of an amendment extending the benefits under the Canada Assistance Act or by alterations in the Unemployment Insurance Act in order that many of these young people who are not provided for now will be taken care of?

Mr. Benson: Mr. Speaker, I am not familiar with the problem regarding residence, but it has been indicated to me by the Minister of National Health and Welfare that residence should not really be a problem under the Canada Assistance Plan. I should also like to suggest, in respect of the use of the figures game, that last week the hon. member and other members of his party were raising the fact that there are more people receiving unemployment insurance than there are unemployed.

[Translation]

UNEMPLOYMENT—SUGGESTED EXPANSION OF MONEY SUPPLY

Mr. Gilbert Rondeau (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, I should like to put a supplementary question to the Minister of Finance.

As a result of the ever-increasing number of unemployed and since new credit facilities for some \$13,425 million have been requested, according to the Canada Sun Life Company, is the Minister of Finance or the government considering the possibility of asking the Bank of Canada to grant the credit in order to meet those constant financial needs?

[English]

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, as everyone knows, there has been a great expansion in the money supply in Canada. Credit is a great deal easier