

### *Unemployment*

worth which would be available in a job, and they cannot have the friendships which flow out of the workplace. This is a real tragedy for those individuals as well as for our society. We are getting so used to such a high unemployment rate that when the statistics come out monthly we feel no sense of outrage on behalf of those one million unemployed.

Within that one million people I would like to identify and remind this House of are three categories which deserve special attention. First let me speak about the young people. Of the number of young males in this country looking for a job in March, 14.1 per cent, or 1.4 for every ten in your block or apartment building, could not find a job. Who are these young people? What will happen to their future if this situation is allowed to continue? At 15, 16 or 19 years of age, or perhaps after college graduation at 22, they go out and look for jobs. The first question an employer asks is, where did you work before? Fourteen per cent of them do not find that beginning work experience. The weeks go by, the months go by, the years go by. On any job application which they put forward, employers ask where they have worked before. These people have to put "nowhere". The employer probably thinks it best that he not hire those people, because experience tells him that people who are experienced in the world of work are more likely to make good employees.

Before we know it, a decade has gone by with a spotty work history. Somebody who is already 30 years of age still has 35 years to go to reach the magic age of 65. We have to predict that those people we are hurting today at 15, 16 or 19 years of age will be the victims of tomorrow and on into the second and third decades. That is what is happening in this country and it is amazing that we feel no sense of outrage about it.

The next class of people I will refer to as the breadwinners. A few years ago that was usually a male who had a wife and family. In our modern age, it could be a female just as easily as a male. These people have family responsibilities. They have children who are dependent upon them for material needs such as shelter, food, transportation and clothing. The young people are dependent on these adults for health, love, guidance, time and attention to help them, in turn, to develop into adults who have a personal sense of worth, adults who are ready and willing to make a personal contribution to the development of this country.

Do we make that job easier for those adults? Do we make the situation better for those children when we say to the breadwinners that they do not belong, that there is no job for them, that they cannot earn an income, have the sense of self-worth that comes from being a productive member of the work force, and cannot have the friendships which flow from the workplace? What does that do to the minds of those people? Not too much, perhaps, in the first day or two, a little more in the first week or two and a great deal more in the first month or two. We have a real tragedy when it spins out to a year or two.

How can those breadwinners maintain that sense of self-worth, that important component of parenthood which allows them to feel secure in their worth and, therefore, have the

kinds of feelings which enable them to deal with their children in positive, developmental ways? As decades go by with extremely high rates of unemployment, are we creating a future generation who will find it difficult to find their place in the mainstream of Canadian society? I suggest we are.

What about the third class of person in Canada, which is a more recent phenomenon? These are what I call the re-entries into the work force, people who mostly have spent a significant portion of their life as parents. As they get into the mid-years of the adult life cycle, their families grow and move away and they are looking for a challenge. Perhaps they have faced widowhood or the spectre of divorce. Then suddenly, after 10, 15 or 20 years of being out of the work force, they have to look for a job for one reason or another.

Our society is very hard on people like that. In looking at an unemployment rate that in real terms in the month of March was 8.5 per cent, it is the young people, the new entrants into the labour force, who are least likely to be able to get that first job to get the experience and possibly develop the skills which will last them for the rest of their lifetime.

I could mention some of the other groups, such as the regional group, people who live on Indian reserves and face 90 per cent unemployment, or people who live in places such as the finance minister's home town, where on Cape Breton Island unemployment in the winter is characteristically very high indeed.

I draw this to the attention of the House because today we have two byelections. The people of Prince Edward Island in the consistency of Cardigan will complete their voting in just a few hours, and an hour after that the polls will close in the constituency of London West. I wonder what is going on in the minds of people who live in the ridings of Cardigan and London West. Do they realize that on Prince Edward Island one year ago, in the month of March, the unemployment rate was horrendously high at 13.4 per cent but that today it is 16 per cent? Do they realize that on that tiny island there are 2,000 fewer people working today than there were one year ago and that the money they would make, if they were still working, would be circulating through the economy and helping the people who run beauty parlors, restaurants and the service industries of the island? But they are not working today. One year ago 6,000 of them were unemployed; today 8,000 are unemployed. The rate has risen from 13.4 per cent to 16 per cent. It began over a decade ago with Liberal cabinets devoted to political gains at the expense of economic reality, aided and abetted by the red rump on the left.

• (1520)

Then let us consider the people of London West. I have data for the city of London. The voters may remember that they returned all the members from London; in 1980 they selected Liberals. One year ago they selected Liberals, and at that time the unemployment rate was 5.5 per cent. Today it is 50 per cent higher at 8.1 per cent. I wonder how many people of London West realize that their unemployment rate is 50 per cent higher than it was a year ago, when they returned every