

to be the equivalent of only six. The government has offered absolutely nothing to the unemployed family man who is between the ages of 25 and 65 years, and nothing to the young executive who came out of university, worked for a company, and now finds himself unemployed.

[*Translation*]

Nothing at all, Mr. Speaker. The government offered nothing to these thousands of people except the 10 per cent increase in unemployment insurance benefits last January. The government has not even been willing to help the municipalities offer more welfare benefits to these people; now, cities are cutting their aid programs.

[*English*]

According to the 1961 census 50 per cent of all Canadians are below the age of 25 years. What has the government offered these people? What has it offered students looking for work in order to raise enough money to enter university in the fall? Finally, the government made a revelation. One fine day, on March 16, the Opportunities for Youth program was divulged. Five ministers called a press conference and told us what they were going to do for young Canadians.

**Mr. Béchard:** Sixty-eight million dollars.

**Mr. Comeau:** Sixty-eight million dollars, the man says. Some of my colleagues will talk about that \$68 million later and show the ridiculous way in which some of it has been spent. Included in that \$68 million mentioned by the hon. member for Bonaventure (Mr. Béchard) is the expenditure for the European Exchange program, subsidized tours for those who can afford the fare there and back. Kiosks are being opened along highways so that our transient youth can gather information and travel leisurely. There is also an athletics scholarship program applicable to a very special 600 or so, and after consultation with the provinces, or supposed consultation with the provinces and municipalities, hostels are to be provided where transient youth may find accommodation. It is becoming obvious such consultation did not take place because we are finding that municipalities have no funds for these hostels.

Then, to offer our young Canadians a boost and give them an incentive, the government has made \$25 million available to be administered by the Department of the Secretary of State. I do not want to deal with it at length. Other members of my party will put that program in proper perspective, but so far as I am concerned it is nothing but a political program. It has very grave political tinges to it. I submit it is not administered objectively at all, and consequently is not helping young Canadians who may need this type of program most.

The answer to all this should be clear, Mr. Speaker. You cannot help a group of people, a certain age group, until you have a full employment program, such as I referred to a few minutes ago. In the type of economy that we have these days, you cannot merely put \$68 million into a program and expect that will solve the problems. In a similar vein, you cannot expect to do

### *Employment Programs*

anything about regional disparities unless the economy is growing at a reasonably rapid rate.

We know that growth is not an end in itself, but that it must be pursued in order to solve our grave social problems. It is economic slack which makes it difficult to pursue pollution abatement programs. Everybody, and particularly our young people, are upset about pollution. But we cannot deal with the pollution problem unless we have the money to deal with it, and in order to have the money to deal with it we must have the proper growth programs. Pollution abatement programs are expensive. This is particularly the case, as has been highly publicized, in the pulp and paper industry. Economic slack forces people to disrupt their way of life and neglect their higher goals in order to search for employment. If the budget which will be presented by the Minister of Finance fails to expand the economy properly, the government will argue that its policies are designed to return the economy to its potential gradually to avoid the risk of more inflation. A quick return to full potential is dangerous, but the government's apparent concept of gradualism is surely inadequate. First, we need an economic plan which will produce a growth rate which is higher than our potential so that the economic slack will be taken up and sufficient jobs created to absorb the large influx into our labour force. Then, and only then, can a gradualist policy be introduced.

• (3:20 p.m.)

What has happened since the Prime Minister took office? The Liberals have set out to curb inflation by creating mass unemployment. This policy, regarded as nonsense by many economists, might be justified by its results if inflation had been cured. But it has not. The inflation spiral is back and the unemployed have never left us. The Prime Minister has failed where he should have succeeded, on the inflation battlefield, and has succeeded only in creating a great army of unemployed.

In December, 1970, the Prime Minister announced that unemployment had become the foremost problem facing the country:

... we have won last year's victory, the one against inflation. It is obvious from the statistics of the past two months that inflation no longer exists in Canada.

Some victory! As has been stated previously, inflation in Canada during the first quarter of 1971 soared upward by 1.2 per cent, the largest advance for this quarter in over a decade. Unemployment remains uncomfortably high at 6 per cent; it has stayed above the 6 per cent mark for 11 months.

[*Translation*]

Problems are increasing day after day. There is no indication that the economy of the country is developing to its full potential. The level of unemployment is still at 6 per cent and the cost of living is ever increasing. The number of workers is rising rapidly and requires the creation of more new jobs. By 1975, the number of jobs needed will go from 1.3 to 1.4 million. In order to develop the economy to its full potential, that increase must run to about 6 per cent.