

She is a highly skilled secretary. She quit work two and a half years ago in order to have an operation. After she could go back to work she got another job, but did not get along with her employer so she made another change. She was doing fine but, as a result of a severe slow down was laid off. Much to that woman's consternation, she has had to apply to metropolitan Toronto for welfare.

This is the kind of situation which exists in every town and city of this country, as a result of the deliberate policy of this government to slow down the economy. The government has completely ignored this kind of situation. Let us look at what has happened in other cities in Canada. It is interesting to note the absence from this Chamber of hon. members from the metropolitan Toronto area. I must amend that statement because I see two out of some 22 are here. They were not absent when the mayor of Toronto wanted to meet with them to discuss their problems, but they are certainly absent today.

Last year the cost of welfare in metropolitan Toronto was \$50 million. It is estimated that in 1971 this cost will increase to \$75 million. It is true that the city of Toronto only pays 20 per cent of the cost, but even that means that the taxpayers of metropolitan Toronto paid \$10 million in welfare costs last year and will pay \$15 million this year. This will have a bearing on their tax rate. In metropolitan Toronto there were 14,800 welfare cases up to December of 1969. This figure for December, 1970 was up to 24,200. Is it any wonder that the people in Toronto, including the mayor and the members of the council, are concerned about what is happening in that city?

In the city of Winnipeg, the cost of welfare in 1969 was \$3,900,000. In 1970, the cost was \$5 million, and the estimated cost for 1971 is \$6 million. In Halifax, the cost of welfare has increased from \$833,000 in 1969 to an estimated \$1,265,000 in 1971. In Hamilton, this cost has increased from \$1,265,000 in 1969 to an estimate of almost \$2,500,000 in 1971. In Windsor, the cost has gone up from \$1,600,000 in 1969 to \$2,270,000 in 1970. In Vancouver, it has increased from \$3,500,000 in 1968 to \$6,115,000 in 1970. So it goes, Mr. Speaker, from city to city and from province to province. The cost to the federal government under the provisions of the various social allowance acts is increasing at an astronomical rate.

In 1970 the federal government paid the province of Quebec \$146 million; the province of Ontario, \$158 million and according to estimates made by the federal government, in 1971 payments to the province of Ontario will increase from \$158 million to \$198 million and the payments to Quebec will increase from \$146 million to \$238 million. I wish the minister were here in order that he might correct these figures if I am wrong. This is what is happening in the provinces and in the cities as a result of the economic policies adopted coldbloodedly and deliberately by this government. It is no wonder the provinces and cities are calling on the federal government to take action. After all, it was not the provinces or the cities that created this unemployment, but the federal government. Therefore, it is the federal government which ought to accept the responsibility of providing the necessary money to meet the increased cost of welfare created by the rapidly rising unemployment rate.

Alleged Non-Support of Employment Programs

Very shortly we will be dealing with major amendments to the Unemployment Insurance Act. The white paper prepared by the government proposes certain amendments on the basis that when unemployment rises above 4 per cent the unemployment insurance fund will not be required to meet the claims of those who are unemployed and are entitled to unemployment insurance. The federal government makes it clear that this country should not have more than 4 per cent unemployment. The white paper suggests that the federal government will pay out of its general revenues the unemployment insurance benefits required in relation to those people unemployed when unemployment is over the 4 per cent figure. I reject this 4 per cent figure. I recognize the fact that in this country we have cold weather which brings tremendous problems in some areas. We have problems in Ottawa because of the inordinate amount of snow. We cannot expect full employment such as is enjoyed in some European countries. In my opinion, full employment in Canada means not more than 3 per cent unemployed. Let us accept the 4 per cent figure suggested by the government as being a fair proposal in respect of unemployment insurance benefits.

• (4:10 p.m.)

Let us assume for the moment that when unemployment is at 4 per cent, it can be considered to be a period of full employment. I suggest to the government that if, for the purpose of discussing a sensible financing and funding of unemployment insurance, the government of Canada said that 4 per cent unemployment is full employment and that over and above that it will carry the burden, then the government could well, and in fact should, adopt the the same principle in connection with the costs of welfare. The hon. member for Spadina (Mr. Ryan) puts the figure at 3 per cent, and I agree with him. I know it is unlikely that the government will listen to my plea that they use the 4 per cent figure, so I am certain they would not listen to my plea that they use the 3 per cent figure. But certainly, there is no reason why the government should not adopt the principle that when unemployment is more than 4 per cent the government will carry the major burden or even the entire burden of the welfare costs which result from this inordinately large amount of unemployment.

I believe that to be a fair proposal. I believe that the cities of Canada cannot continue to carry the burden of the tremendous increase in welfare costs which we have seen in every city in Canada in the past two or three years. I believe that unemployment has been created to a large extent by the government of Canada, and I think the government should act now. Therefore, I want to move an amendment to the motion moved by the hon. member for Spadina.

I move, seconded by the hon. member for Broadview (Mr. Gilbert):

That the motion be amended by inserting therein, immediately after the words "emergency financial support," the words "including an increase in the federal government's share of costs under the Canada Assistance Plan from 50 to 65 per cent".