

The Address—Mr. MacInnis

public's holdings of government securities have reached an all-time total. Savings deposits in Canadian banks have never been higher. Labour income is at an all-time high. Retail sales are higher than ever before. Liquidity in the Canadian economy is strong. Capital spending on new plant and equipment is on the increase.

Figures from the dominion bureau of statistics released on November 15 show that 6,131,000 Canadians were at work. In October there were 92,000 more people at work than in October of the previous year. In the last three years the Canadian economy has provided 272,000 new jobs, a marked increase over the three-year period preceding the election of this government. Canadian workers received an estimated \$1,577 million in wages and salaries in June, 1960, an increase of 2.9 per cent over the previous month and 3.2 per cent over the same month in 1959. In the first half of 1960 labour income was up 4.4 per cent compared with the first half of last year.

I cite these statistics, Mr. Speaker, to point up the rather unusual environment in which we have to combat a problem of unemployment. Our economy is obviously forging ahead, but despite the incontestable fact of an expanding and prosperous economy we do have the problem of unemployment. Even with the great strides the economy has taken it has not been able to accommodate all of the unprecedented increase in the number of Canadians who, for various reasons, are looking for jobs. Hon. members are well aware of the reasons for this increase: the large influx of young men and women into the labour market, technological displacement, the shift of agricultural population to the cities, the increase in married women working, relatively young pensioners, farmers and others who take on full-time or part time jobs.

Since the government came to office in 1957 it has applied itself to the problem of unemployment with a measure of diligence and determination that has earned the support of all thinking Canadians. The government has attacked unemployment with a wide variety of weapons. First, of all, the maximum of assistance is being paid to those who are unemployed. Benefits have been extended since this government took office to cover fishermen and married women. The benefit period has been increased from 36 to 52 weeks and the amounts of the benefits themselves have been increased.

The government recognizes the fact that to fight unemployment something more is needed than financial assistance to those without jobs. The present government has

increased from 50 to 75 per cent its contribution for training unemployed workers. For the fiscal year 1959-60 the federal government has provided \$9.5 million for what we now know as vocational training assistance. In the two winters it has been in operation the winter works incentive program has created a total of 3.5 million man days of work which otherwise would not have been provided. It has provided over 150,000 new on-site and off-site jobs. A conservative estimate is that this year the program will provide 200,000 new on-site and off-site jobs. That figure could go as high as 250,000. The federal contribution is 50 per cent of labour costs. The contributions of the provinces last year ranged from nothing to 25 per cent and so far this year from nothing to 40 per cent.

The government has increased the amount of money available for direct housing loans from \$1 billion to \$1.5 billion. It has increased the total amount of loans that can be made by approved lenders from \$4 billion to \$6 billion. These government housing policies, Mr. Speaker, have a happy combination of results; more and better housing for Canadians and more jobs for those connected with the construction industry.

It is also encouraging to see that the government is giving the highest priority to work projects which will provide the highest degree of employment. I understand that the government has some 103 public works projects totalling \$54 million which will be continued throughout the winter.

The recent conference called by the Prime Minister to discuss the unemployment problem was, I think, an important and significant event in Canadian history. It served to emphasize the common interest of government, labour and industry in the progress of the economy and their common responsibility for it. It was another advance for the partnership policy of this government with industry, farmers, labour and other important groups in the economy.

The creation of a national productivity council, announced by the Prime Minister at the conference and referred to in the speech from the throne, heralds the beginning of an integrated, massive, national assault on the problem of unemployment. If this council does its job, as it can and as I believe it will, there may develop in Canada some of the most effective measures to combat unemployment to be found anywhere in the western world. This productivity council and the policies it may recommend are a challenge to both the public and private sectors of the Canadian economy to demonstrate in the most striking possible way how the attentions and energies of a free people in