

*Alleged Failure to Reduce Unemployment*

ages of 14 and 19, people facing the problems of technological change and attainment of the skills required for the future, should be at school instead of seeking work.

Those between the ages of 20 and 24, people who are presumably just leaving high school, represent 6.1 per cent of the unemployed. Those between the ages of 25 and 34 represent 3.7 per cent; those between the ages of 35 and 44, 3.6 per cent; between the ages of 45 and 54, 3.5 per cent; between the ages of 55 and 64, 4.6 per cent. Finally, those over 65, people who consider themselves employable and want to continue working, represent 5.9 per cent of the unemployed. This balances out to around 4.7 per cent.

I should like to make a point made often by the Economic Council. The word "productivity" seems to dominate each one of the five issues. Productivity is supposed to solve all our unemployment problems. I agree that the word is very important in today's context, because without increased productivity we cannot meet growing competition from countries that do have a greater productivity than we. It is not that our workers are less capable or less skilled; on the contrary, everything being equal, they have shown their ability to produce quality and numbers as well as any other country.

As a result of technological change and automation it is possible to reduce a work force from 100 to 10 and double or even triple productivity in certain highly automated industries. Whether or not we like it, the age of cybation is not too far away and we have got to start thinking about it. Those who are somewhat more reactionary than others should not get too excited if sooner or later workers in these highly automated industries start talking about shorter hours, a shorter work week. This will not be the end of the world because ironically, and perhaps fortunately, this does create new industries, industries that in the final analysis may be the solution to the problems of people in certain parts of this country and in the United States where geography plays such a big role in unemployment. A shorter work week would create more leisure time, which in turn would create new industries. For example, I think of snowmobiles, outboard motors, tourism—hon. members know them all.

The biggest mistake we could make in this country would be to ruin some of the beauty spots in this great country of ours by forcing industry into areas which cannot support it under normal circumstances. Perhaps in five,

[Mr. Mackasey.]

10, 15 or 20 years' time these unspoiled areas of Canada will be our greatest investment and source of wealth, the basis of a tourist industry that invites Canadians to travel and discover their own land.

In conclusion, as a member of the cabinet I view the unemployment figures with concern. Tomorrow the minister of manpower will be dealing with them and with some of the progressive steps that he has taken to alleviate some of the problems I have outlined, such as education, vocational schools and retraining. The minister of forestry and his department are looking after the particular problem of regional development. But the one thing that none of us wants is a doom and gloom philosophy, because psychologically that is not good for the economy. We will not solve our problems by whistling in the dark. Neither will we solve them by being continuously pessimistic about our ability to work ourselves out of the problem of unemployment. In 1963 we faced the same problem and solved it. We are facing it now and in a comparatively short time will solve it once more.

I listened to the speech of the hon. member from the New Democratic party and I did have a lot of wonderful notes to refer to but will not bother because I realize I have spoken long enough. He said nothing that was very significant. I do not say that in an abrasive fashion. However, I was rather pleased to see a subtle change in his approach when he suggested a shift from socialism to a more liberalized economy. After telling the Liberals and Conservatives that we did not have the answers, the hon. member went on to say that what we required was government capital and planning mixed with amounts of private capital.

I do not think that this approach is any different from the approach we have taken for some years. Certainly this was the formula that led to the great petroleum boom in the north and is a philosophy that both major parties have endorsed for many years. If our good friends in the New Democratic party are finally coming round to the more enlightened philosophies of the Conservatives and the Liberals, then I am very pleased to see it. However, if they are not—as I rather suspect is the case—then I hope they will not suggest that we adopt a pattern that is now being proposed to solve current problems in England.

The Labour party in England has had a wonderful opportunity to do something for a