

What I am saying, and what should be clear to all members, is that the savings are not being put into the general revenue of Canada to reduce debt and to reduce our spending, but are being redirected into job-creation programs and skill-training programs which will reduce unemployment.

Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): Don't expect the Tories to understand anything.

Mr. Anderson: In all sincerity, I expected the hon. member for Kingston and The Islands to look at the program and at least grant that jobs will be created as a result of funding from this program. I do not expect the New Democratic Party to understand it, because economics is not their strong forte, but I did expect some hon. members opposite would congratulate the government on its attempt not to maintain people on unemployment insurance, but to have these funds go into training people so they will be able to find permanent jobs. I also expected congratulations from that side for the fact that this money will go into direct job creation as opposed to having people draw benefits.

I consider it degrading for persons to have to stay at home and draw benefits. Instead of that, hopefully, we will have them out working. I would have hoped that the official opposition would have been at least honest enough to say that that is a more desirable stance than having an individual sit at home drawing benefits, which is a demoralizing process. After 35 meetings in committee, and after several days of debate in the House, it appears that there is no way that this reached the minds of the opposition. The only people who will probably realize this will be the people of Canada, and I suppose they are the ultimate judge. I am more than prepared, as a Liberal member of parliament, to go before the people of Canada next year and say that the Liberal party has a positive approach to unemployment, and that it is not putting out more money for unemployment insurance—

An hon. Member: You created it.

Mr. Anderson:—but putting out more money for the creation of jobs and the upgrading of skills.

In 1979-1980 the government employment strategy program will create employment for 638,000 individuals. This is far in excess of the 249,000 claimants who may be potentially prevented from establishing claims as a result of Bill C-14. That is a net gain, and surely it is a desirable gain when more Canadians will be working next year than are working this year. We hear in this House, day after day, about problems besetting this country, but what is not very often said is that, for example, in 1968 there were 7,514,000 Canadians working, and in May, 1978, we had 10,025,000 people working, which means an average number of jobs created per year under this government of 250,900, this during the toughest ten years in world history with regard to economics.

We have heard about the women and we have heard about the young, but what has not been said is that the percentage of population over 15 years of age has reached the highest employment level ever in our history. For example, in May,

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1968, the percentage was 54.6, and in May, 1978, it was 57.1 per cent. The participation rate in 1958 was 57.1 per cent, and in May of 1978 it was 62.5 per cent. These are not unpleasant facts to bring up because they show that Canada has had a sustained growth over the years.

In the same period of time it is interesting to note that the Federal Republic of Germany, which is looked upon by many Canadians as a modern miracle and an example of hard work, growth and dedication, over the last eight years has had a negative growth. There are less people working in West Germany today than there were in 1970, but in Canada at the same time we have had an average growth of 250,000 people per year, in a population of less than 20 million, a very large growth ratio. However, do we ever hear anybody saying that this has been an era of sustained growth?

Instead, what we hear today from the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands is that in order to promote Canadian unity we should pay more money out in unemployment insurance benefits. If that is the Tory party's platform going into the next election, what will probably happen is what has happened over the last three elections.

I had the good fortune to receive a letter from the Conservative party today, and I would like to include some of it in my remarks. It is addressed to Hugh Anderson, member of parliament, House of Commons, Ottawa. It says, "I am sure that you are deeply concerned about the future of our country and recognize the need for a better government, a stronger economy and a new hope for our future. This is why I am writing to you today, to enlist your support for the Progressive Conservative Party of Canada."

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): It is probably signed by Keith Davey.

Mr. Anderson: Obviously the Conservative party has been putting up a brave façade if they are enlisting the support of the Liberal Party of Canada in the upcoming federal election. Incidentally, this letter is signed by Robert L. Stanfield, and he concludes his letter by saying that, "as party leader in the past three elections I personally know that a party can come close and yet lose by a mere handful of votes. Let us not let this happen next time. Help close the gap with your personal contribution to the PC Canada Fund today."

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Anderson: We are all aware that the Conservative party has been an error-prone party, but if they are counting on my help in the next election I am afraid they are going to lose it by another few votes again.

● (1532)

An hon. Member: Oh, no!

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): We count on you as one of our greatest assets.