

What has this done? This has created even further unemployment. I wonder if people could put their eyes on the concept that unemployment is merely a factor between needed productive hours and productive capacity. By that I mean we need x number of labour hours to produce our output. The reality is that these relationships have been changing over time. As we become a more technological society, we suddenly discover we need less labour input.

I question whether this is a failure of our system or whether it is something to be proud of. Are we evolving into a society in which we have to work fewer hours?

I can remember when I was very young my parents working six days a week. During my working years we have all worked five days a week. The question is do we need to work as many hours as we do and why are we working as many hours as we do? Maybe we are chasing a materialistic society. Maybe we are chasing all kinds of things that we do not really need.

The reality is unemployment has continued to go up from the 17th century right up until today. We can look at a number of features if we want to focus on the unemployed; those 1.559 million people currently out of work in Canada, plus a certain number of those on welfare, who could be gainfully employed.

As a consequence we have a huge mass of people not working. At the same time we have people in our workforce who are working 60 hours and 70 hours a week. Clearly the problem with unemployment is not that it exists but that it is concentrated in a small group of people. Unfortunately it is getting larger.

What is the solution to this problem? The problem is that unemployment is concentrated in the youth, the unskilled and in those who have watched their skills change. This is probably a growing sector of our unemployment. Those people possibly in their forties who started off in the job market believing that they had a job for life have found that structural unemployment has caught up with them and put them out of a job.

How are we going to change our unemployment rate? Our unemployment rate, as I mentioned, is merely a factor of required labour hours. Either we increase the number of labour hours by increasing our business activity or we change the labour hours to some extent. I will leave the debate about changing labour hours for another day.

Basically our other orientation is to increase the number of required labour hours by increasing productivity. Within that parameter of increased labour hours we also have to look back at the pool of the unemployed, the people who are unskilled, those people who have structural change in their lives where their skills have disappeared and the youth who possibly have dropped out of school at a very early age and similarly are unskilled. How could we address increasing the number of

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labour hours? We can do it in two ways. We can increase our productivity.

• (1545)

The government has enacted legislation regarding a reduction in payroll taxes. It would reduce the costs of businesses to employ people. It would create an incentive for businesses to employ more people and to expand in our society. It would create a demand for more labour hours. This is something our government has done, and I go back to the original motion, in terms of concrete measures.

We have implemented an infrastructure spending program to create assets, to create productive resources. One municipality in my riding has agreed to increase the size of its arena. It has an employment policy to employ local workers. People who are unemployed will be working. There is a promise of work. The infrastructure spending program is what I call seed capital because it has a tendency to grow. If a job is created for one person working on the arena, he goes downtown and buys more products. He consumes more. He creates more jobs. It is a way to increase productivity.

We have addressed to some extent the need of small and medium sized businesses to have access to better capital. We have done it in a number of ways. We have talked about implementing a code of ethics with the banks to allow small businesses better access to capital markets. We will also implement other programs to deal with access to equity capital markets. Once again it will give business an incentive to create new jobs.

Another initiative of ours is the information highway. It is another aspect of 21st century technology; it brings Canada into the 21st century. It is the second stage of our technological revolution.

Finally, we have to increase the opportunity for wages and employment. We have to look at the pool of unemployed people. Do not mistake what I have said. I did not say it was good that all these people are unemployed. I am saying that unemployment may be with us for a long time. It may be an asset if we handle it properly.

To effect skills so that people who are unemployed today have better access to the job market when expansion occurs we have the youth corps. It will teach some skills to young people who are currently unemployed and have dropped out of the high school system. We have implemented an apprenticeship program to give young people and others job experience. It will give better skills to those people whose skills have shifted over the years.

The original motion refers to lack of vision and lack of concrete measures. That is not so.