

Supply—Labour

unemployment. But I also point out that there has been a very significant decrease in total unemployment in the Atlantic provinces, a very significant decrease. There has been a very significant decrease in total unemployment on Cape Breton island over the past two years; there is no doubt about that. It is quite clear that the unemployment rate, for example in the province of Ontario, is certainly relatively low, on the prairies it is relatively low and in British Columbia it is certainly relatively low in comparison with the Atlantic provinces. It is clear, also, that the remaining areas of the country which require continuing special measures to reduce further unemployment include the Atlantic provinces and eastern Quebec. This is true, and we hope that in the speech from the throne it will be possible to conduct a more constructive debate on this question, in the light of proposals that may be made in that document, to reduce further unemployment in these areas.

I suggest, Mr. Chairman, that it is unfair to the committee really to expect a general debate on supplementary estimates on the question of unemployment, when we are dealing with three or four items in the general administration that do not raise the question at all. I am ready to debate the question on the speech from the throne, and there we will all have a chance to put our position before the house. However, I do not think it is fair to ask the committee to deal with the question on this particular vote, which deals with grants to the international institute for labour studies, legal fees, and so on.

Mr. Pugh: Mr. Chairman, perhaps I may just say a word or two with regard to what the minister has been saying. I come from British Columbia and admit that we do have a very much better employment picture than the Atlantic provinces; but as a Canadian, and coming from British Columbia, I would like to see in other parts of this country the same level of employment and the same lack of unemployment as we have in British Columbia. The minister has suggested that perhaps in the speech from the throne he will be able to answer all these questions. I put it straight to the minister now: How is he going to answer all these questions? He is going to get on his feet perhaps once, not subject to questioning at all, and he is going to give almost the same wonderful, rosy picture of everything that he has given in the past. The minister and the Minister of Transport will get to their feet and give the same wonderful, rosy picture that was handed out prior to the

[Mr. MacEachen.]

last election as to what they were going to do in the province of Nova Scotia and in the other Atlantic provinces. They said, "We are going to cure unemployment. We are going to make employment as good as elsewhere in Canada". The minister's own statistics, which he knows so well, show a figure of 13 per cent unemployment in the Atlantic provinces, which is much higher than elsewhere in this country, where it is 6 per cent. It is bad enough in the rest of Canada, but they said they were going to cure this situation.

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Chairman, I would point out that the statistics the hon. member has given relate to the situation three years ago in the Atlantic provinces.

Mr. Pugh: Don't worry about what it was three years ago; merely say to yourself, "Am I carrying out my promises that were given prior to the election in these rosy speeches made by myself and the Minister of Transport as to what we were going to do to solve the unemployment situation?" The minister has been asked to answer this question tonight, not in a debate starting on Monday, Tuesday, or Wednesday next. He has been asked to stick on the record one, two or three special things which he and his government have done for the Atlantic provinces in order to cure unemployment. I am not asking for just those specific things which were instituted by the last government and carried on by this government, but we want the special programs which have been brought in by this government for the advantage of and to reduce unemployment in the Atlantic provinces.

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Chairman, my hon. friends have assured me that they would be satisfied with at least three such policies.

Mr. Pugh: Yes.

Mr. MacEachen: So I will give them three. One is the \$100 million that has been put aside for the disposal of the Atlantic development board. That is a very important, new policy. Second, the present government has contributed 90 per cent of the cost of completing the trans-Canada highway in the Atlantic provinces.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. MacEachen: Yes, 90 per cent.

Mr. Pugh: Is that a brand new one?

Mr. MacEachen: This is a new policy which is having very substantial effects in the province of Newfoundland, in the province