ciations. I will not trade statistics with the minister. I know that the unemployment rate in the Atlantic region of Canada, that is the number of unemployed as a percentage of the labour force, is, according to the revised statistical method of reporting today, 10.2 per cent. It is, therefore, up .2 per cent from the same period last year. That is why I am taking part in this debate.

I do not want to load the record with accusations that the government is doing nothing—that would be ridiculous. I know the government is doing something and I welcome the announcement, for instance, about the consortium Multiplex in Saint John. I just suggest that up to now the government has not done enough.

The conclusion of the debate on the budget delivered by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson) last December, comes at a time when we are all very deeply concerned about the issue of unemployment which, by the admission of the Minister of Finance himself, was deliberately created—a hardship by cabinet decree. On Tuesday, the Minister of Finance read the provinces a little lecture on how great he and the government were. I read the lecture, too. We were given it and also given the statistical tables. It occurred to me that it is normal practice for references to greatness to be left to the judgment of history. But this government is not content to await that judgment. They want to attempt to ensure their place in history now. In this they can be assured of some distinction, the distinction, I suggest, of placing a very cruel and unwarranted strain on the whole fabric of Canadian life.

I have tried to place myself in the position of one of the provincial ministers when the Minister of Finance told them to borrow to meet the increased costs of welfare—a superb response to a very urgent need. That is what the minister suggested, but he should have remembered that the increased cost was brought on by the federal government's decision to be tough on the issue of employment. The provincial ministers must have felt something of the shock one experiences in going from a warm room to an ice cold shower; bracing, if you can stand the shock.

What troubles me about unemployment, what troubles me after the genuine agony of those 668,000 Canadians who are totally out of work, is the government's complacency in the face of the figures. We continue to be treated to little homilies about it not being as bad as the statistics indicate. We have just had another example of that. We are urged to remain steady; we are asked to cool it, to keep calm. Well, the country needs a lot more passion from this government. We need evidence of more fire in the government's collective belly.

We had high hopes from the Minister of Labour (Mr. Mackasey). We thought for a time that he was the conscience of the cabinet. But when the minister was faced with an ugly situation in Kingston when frustrated and angry men broke a window in the national employment office, all we got from the conscience of the cabinet was the statement that the glass was being replaced. As my leader reminded the country, men and women who want to work but cannot are losing a little bit of themselves every day. That is tragic. Tragic indeed it is, and this

government is compounding the tragedy by their lack of a forthright policy to face the most serious issue that has faced this country since the second world war.

The Atlantic report published the other day by APEC is a cool and, if I can put it this way, neutral analysis of the situation in Atlantic Canada. The report reads:

> The economy of the Atlantic provinces during 1970 was placed once again in the unenviable position of being forced to withstand the impact of the conventional methods of slowing the progress of inflation without having contributed to the phenomenon.

That is the economic history of the Maritimes in a sentence.

> Although there was more evidence than ever before that regional difficulties were being recognized through discretionary fiscal policies, it was clearly apparent that more fine tuning of these measures was still necessary. Under the circumstances the regional economy appeared to fare reasonably well during the year relative to past performance and to the faltering national economy. However, many of the deep rooted problems appeared to worsen under the influence of anti-inflationary policies, a slowing national economy and a sluggish U.S. economy.

I make no apology for quoting these and one or two more paragraphs from APEC's analysis of current economic conditions and trends. The council has won for itself an enviable reputation for being apolitical and research oriented. It plays no favourites and has won the respect of provincial governments, industry and trade unions for its carefully studied forecasts of economic prospects.

• (5:20 p.m.)

The analysis suggests that:

> ...the Atlantic region will not move into the upturn of the current cycle until at least the latter part of the third quarter.

The latter part of the third quarter is some six months ahead.

> As the 1970's began the principle question being raised in the Atlantic provinces was whether federal authorities would be willing to temper anti-inflationary policies to ease the impact on the economically immature areas of the country. Uniform application of these policies in the past has shown that their impact was most severe in areas such as the Atlantic region.
>
> Some attempt was made to lighten the burden of the anti-inflationary strategy on the regional economy in the March federal budget. These measures included: increased funds for loans to the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation to offset expected declines in the flow of private housing, money to assist low cost housing, aid to municipalities in setting up pollution abatement plants; increased mortgage funds for farm credit... and increased funds for regional economic expansion.

But, Mr. Speaker, although these programs did set a precedent in recognizing the unique character of the regional economy, APEC's response was that policies expressly designed to alleviate the impact of federal contra-cyclical policies were needed. It was stressed that the economic structure of the region makes it particularly susceptible to economic slowdowns. Downturns occur more easily and faster than in the nation and recovery lags behind. Moreover, the region is adversely affected by cyclical variations and this is reinforced by the application of the broad levers of fiscal and monetary policy used to offset inflationary tendencies.