

Alleged Non-Support of Employment Programs

That is why I seriously urge the government to consider the situation, keeping in mind the proposals of Social Credit. Let us try them, and if these solutions prove inefficient, let us put them aside. But if they should prove effective, we shall all turn *Créditistes*!

[English]

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, we are debating the very serious financial position of most of the cities of Canada and the provinces because of the tremendous increase in the cost of welfare today. This, in turn, has been brought about by the unprecedented increase this last year in the number of people unemployed in Canada. The figures we received earlier this month indicated that 668,000 people were unemployed in January, 1971. If one adds the 100,000 people attending manpower training courses, one sees that over three-quarters of a million people are in fact unemployed.

The seasonally adjusted percentage of unemployed in January was 6.2 per cent. The Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson) took pride in, and were happy with, the fact that the seasonally adjusted rate had come down. Only a government headed by a millionaire, by a man who has never had to worry about where his next meal would come from, a government headed by a man who did not have to worry about how to finance his next trip to a distant part of this world, could take pride in and be happy with a statistic such as that. Only a government that played the numbers game could ignore the tremendously difficult, indeed traumatic conditions faced by so many people in this country.

I talked this morning to some of the people in the public welfare department in the city of Winnipeg, and let me make it clear that, compared to some areas in Canada, Winnipeg is doing quite well. I heard over the radio a couple of days ago an interview with the hon. member for Matane (Mr. De Bané). He talked, and talked much more eloquently than I could, about the situation in his constituency, where in most of the towns 30 per cent of the people were on welfare and in the rural areas 50 per cent were on welfare. This is not the case in the city of Winnipeg, but I should like to put on the record a few illustrations of the kinds of problems the city has had to meet and the kind of people to whom the city has had to render assistance in the past year as a result of the tremendous increase in unemployment.

Before I do that, I do want to make it clear once more, as I have in the past, that these three-quarters of a million unemployed did not result from an accident but rather from a deliberate plan by the government, as enunciated by no less a person than the Prime Minister. Last year, in answer to a question about how determined he was in his attempts to beat the rising cost of living, the Prime Minister said he would not be deterred even if we had to have 6 per cent unemployment, he would not curtail his program of restraint because inflation had to be overcome. We now have 8 per cent unemployment, and it is this which has given rise to the problem that I am going to refer to in a moment.

[Mr. Caouette.]

The city of Winnipeg has had for several years a supplementary welfare plan. In cases where a man is working full time but has a large family, or where illness strikes a family, or in cases where because of lack of qualifications the wage earned is insufficient to meet the needs of the family, the city of Winnipeg supplements welfare assistance. I should like to cite the case of a married man with seven children who had worked in a plant for a number of years. His education was not very good and he was unable to get a better job, so the city supplemented his earnings to the extent of somewhere between \$50 and \$100 a month. The plant, like so many other plants, was experiencing difficult times and had to lay off this man. As a result, today the city is paying the full cost of welfare for the family, which amounts to something in the neighbourhood of \$400 a month.

Then, there is the case of a family of five. The husband had no formal skills but through his work had gained experience as a cook. As long as he was working he was able to manage, but when he was laid off he was unable to find another job as a cook. He has been doing casual work, such as driving a taxi, but he has not been able to earn enough money to keep his family, so the city paid him supplementary welfare.

My third case is that of a young man who is putting himself through university, something that the country has been urging our young people to do in order to improve their educational qualifications. He is now in the third year of his bachelor of science course and he has helped maintain himself by part time work during the school year and by working full time in the summer as a clerk. Recently he was laid off. He has been unable to get any part time work, so is now receiving welfare assistance from the city of Winnipeg. To his consternation, he finds that when he tries to get the only kind of job available, that is an unskilled job, he is told that he is over-trained. This man is married and has six children. He was in the air force and was trained as an air controller. He was honourably discharged because of a mild case of epilepsy. He took a job with the Department of Transport for some time and was then laid off. He accepted the advice of the government of Canada and arranged to take a course in business administration at the Red River Community College. This is a man who has been fairly well trained in two skills, but he cannot get a job at the present time. He is unemployed and the city of Winnipeg is paying the necessary amount of welfare to keep the family.

• (4:00 p.m.)

I could duplicate this sort of example in respect of individuals in every city in Canada. On Saturday, January 30, there was a full page article in the *Toronto Star* dealing with a woman who lives in Don Mills. I am sorry that the hon. member for Don Valley (Mr. Kaplan) is not here, although I think he tried to ask a question about this. He does not have much personal experience in respect of unemployment problems, but he should read this newspaper article. It refers to a woman who is a trained nurse. Unfortunately, because she was trained in Scotland, she is unable to work as a nurse in Canada.