

Job Creation

action will not create more problems than it resolves with the proposal for constitutional change.

The problem that has plagued Canada and Canadians for almost all of our history is unemployment. In fact, only in the war and post-war years has this nation enjoyed relatively full employment. What do we mean by full employment? I want to put on the record of the House the view that was expressed by the parliamentary task force in its report entitled "Work for Tomorrow". It dealt with full employment in that concept, asking if Canada would commit itself to a goal of full employment.

That parliamentary task force, which consisted of members of the House of Commons from both the government and the opposition side, reminded Canadians in its report that in 1945 in a white paper on unemployment, this statement was made:

The government has stated unequivocally its adoption of a high and stable level of employment and income, and thereby higher standards of living, as a major aim of government policy.

In 1945 the Liberal government said that its major aim was the achievement of full employment. In the time that has transpired since, we are still faced in this country with massive and chronic unemployment. It is very difficult to take the government and its ministers seriously when they indicate in the House and elsewhere that they are committed to programs to establish full employment in Canada. That same task force on employment in Canada said in its report:

It is ironic that 15 years after the creation of the Department of Manpower and Immigration and despite some of its successful programs, the manpower problems it was created to solve still exist. There are still shortages of skilled manpower, and the level of unemployment is now much higher than it was in the mid-sixties.

That is what a parliamentary task force said of the efforts of the then minister of manpower and immigration and his department to resolve unemployment in Canada. This criticism is valuable because it comes from friends of the government as well as opponents. We are still left with the problem, in spite of the shallow words of the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Axworthy), of massive unemployment in this country.

This very day representatives of the Canadian Labour Congress are meeting in Ottawa. They have gathered together some 20 persons who are victims of the high interest rate policy of the government which, in turn, is contributing to unemployment in this country. Those persons are faced with foreclosure actions on their homes. After years of spending on mortgage and interest payments, they are faced with the loss of their homes. It is in that context and at that point in our history that we have to consider some of these very serious economic problems, of which the ultimate one for a Canadian is unemployment.

The Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Gray) referred to the Speech from the Throne which was delivered in the House on April 14, 1980. He indicated what were the government's policies to cure the economic ills of this country. He did it in very definite terms. What the minister forgot to

mention was that in that same Speech from the Throne delivered on April 14, 1980, there was this promise:

In particular, my government recognizes the need to protect those Canadians most affected by unacceptably high interest rates. My government will act to assist those unable to bear the burden of renegotiating their home mortgages in the present abnormal situation so that the spectre of foreclosure will be avoided.

That is the hollow promise made in the Speech from the Throne. That is the promise the members of the Canadian Labour Congress and those home owners in danger of losing their homes want the government to face almost two years later. There is yet no substantial assistance for home owners other than the approximately 12,500 across Canada who meet the very strict requirement of the government test for eligibility.

An hon. Member: It is consistent.

Mr. Crosby: It is not consistent with that promise. In the same way, the utterances of the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce with respect to the economic proposals and programs of the government are as hollow as were the promises of assistance to home owners.

Any parliamentary consideration of job-creation measures must be given full and careful attention by all hon. members. Yet job-creation measures that are not an integrated part of an over-all industrial strategy that has full employment as its aim and purpose will be almost meaningless and, in fact, will be just another form of social welfare measure.

Let me make it clear that the current urgent state of the nation's economy justifies social welfare measures for unemployed Canadians. I support make-work programs for that very reason. What we must, however, consider and develop is an industrial plan and strategy that will result in the permanent employment of our labour force.

I want to review in some detail the whole matter of job creation, but first it is necessary to consider and review the current employment situation. I want to make that review in the context of the Atlantic area of Canada.

Mention of the Atlantic area prompts me to inform the House that when it comes to unemployment, Atlantic Canada tops the list. Here are some of the statistics. Newfoundland has an unemployment rate of 15.2 per cent, New Brunswick 11.3 per cent, Nova Scotia 10.2 per cent and Prince Edward Island 9.9 per cent. That compares with a Canadian average that is much lower than that figure. There are 37,000 people unemployed in the Province of Nova Scotia as of October; Newfoundland has 33,000 people unemployed; Prince Edward Island, 5,000; New Brunswick, 34,000. We simply cannot carry on with that level of unemployment in the Atlantic area and with that number of persons unemployed and beset with all the social and other problems that go with unemployment. It is even worse than that, as other hon. members have pointed out.

• (2050)

The method of acquiring the unemployment statistics in Canada does not take into account the thousands across this