

total rejection of the government's responsibility to maintain full employment I suggest is tragic not only to the people who are affected but it is also a severe blow to the unity of the nation, as I have pointed out on many occasions and as the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) emphasized today. Although we have a seasonally adjusted figure of 4.8 per cent unemployment across Canada in the middle of December, we have a figure of over 7 per cent in the Atlantic provinces and about 7 per cent in the province of Quebec.

If we are to go by past performances, I draw your attention to the fact that in January 1967 and January 1968 the unemployment figures across the country generally, but particularly in the Atlantic provinces and in the province of Quebec, were much higher than they had been in the preceding December months. I forecast, if I may with some trepidation in case I am proven very wrong, that the unemployment rate in the Atlantic provinces for this month of January may go to 10 per cent, 11 per cent or even 12 per cent seasonally adjusted, and that it will go to 8 per cent or 9 per cent in the province of Quebec. I forecast, too, that unemployment across Canada will be more than 5 per cent.

How then can one expect to eliminate the feeling of abandonment which people in the Atlantic provinces have, which sections of the province of Quebec have, which indeed sections of the province of Ontario have? If you go to some of the northern communities in this province of Ontario you find that the local rate of unemployment is much higher than the average national rate. How can one avoid giving those people a feeling of abandonment, a feeling of grievance against our community and our society, by policies of this sort?

And in that total picture I also want to add, because I think it is relevant in the year 1969, that you have the young people of Canada unable to find jobs during the summer in order to help them pursue their education. Those who are badly off and who need to supplement the little income they have are unable to find jobs during the winter. These young people have been unable to obtain the scholarship money which had been promised, and yet people condemn the young people on the campuses and all over the country for feeling desperate and alienated; for taking actions of which I do not approve, of which no mature person can approve, but actions which are totally explainable in the terms of the abandonment which they suffer at the

Alleged Failure to Reduce Unemployment

hands of governments across this country, and particularly and especially at the hands of the federal government.

In the last few minutes at my disposal this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, I want to say to my hon. friend the Leader of the Opposition, whom one learns to like more and more as one gets to know him more, that in my estimation he would not improve the situation any more than the present government has done. I want to point out that the policies which are supported by both traditional parties in this country invariably lead to the kind of situation in which we find ourselves today.

An hon. Member: And have had for 100 years.

Mr. Lewis: We have had, as one of my colleagues mentions, 100 years of them, and we have always had this kind of situation.

Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West): Tell us about Saskatchewan.

Mr. Lewis: Unemployment goes up and prices continue to go up as well. The reason for that, and I suggest that hon. members consider my proposition seriously, is that the corporate power in this country at the present time controls the market, controls the prices, and through undistributed profits, retained earnings, controls the largest part of the investment pool of this country. The result of this is that there is no allocation of investment, that there is no direction of the investment that takes place.

I put this proposition to hon. members of the Conservative party who represent constituencies in the Atlantic provinces, that the problems of regional disparity will never be solved in those provinces until all of us are prepared to accept a massive role by government in direct public investment, in public investment joined with private investment if that is desirable, in order that there be some priority to investments in this country. We have to accept a massive role by government in order that we do not have large office buildings going up while housing stands still, or the building of service stations across the country which are totally unnecessary or duplications of services already existing while other construction does not take place. These things occur at a time when it is still possible for a company to come to this House of Commons asking for an increase in its capitalization of hundreds of thousands or of millions of dollars, and members of the two