

*Economic Policies and Unemployment*

sectors of the economy do not create an inflationary environment, but only respond to it. "Unfortunately," the CLC said, "it is all too evident that there is still a good deal of misunderstanding on this point." If there is a misunderstanding, it appears to be on the part of the Congress. The sixth annual review of the Economic Council of Canada, which was signed by representatives of the CLC who sit on that body, pointed out that it was frequently assumed that maintaining the high standard of performance of our economy was almost entirely the responsibility of government, particularly the federal government. "Nothing could be further from the truth," the Council emphasized. While governments had a large and influential role to play, the report maintained that the great bulk of decisions affecting the economy are made outside the ranks of government. "It is vitally important," The Council noted at another stage, "that there should exist in Canada a much broader and better understanding of the relationships between costs, prices, productivity and incomes, as a basis for improved decision-making. Also needed in the public domain is a better appreciation of the basic factors that should be taken into account in the bargaining and price-setting process."

If anything, the increases in unemployment that have taken place during the early months of this year only serve to underline the importance of all sectors of the economy joining in a national effort to help break the inflationary spiral by voluntary action. So long, however, as there is a widespread failure to understand and appreciate the vital nature of the relationship between costs, prices and productivity and incomes outlined by the Economic Council, the government is left with no choice but to continue to maintain restraints on the economy that are essential to halt the cost-price spiral and set the stage for a return to strong, but stable economic growth.

Two years ago this government told the Canadian people that it was prepared to make the tough decisions that were needed to serve the long-term interests of the nation as a whole. This government was returned to office with this mandate and we have no intention of betraying it now. Despite the sound and fury being generated by opposition members, I have considerable confidence the Canadian people have enough good sense to understand why the government must continue to pursue what is now a hard and difficult course.

[Mr. Benson.]

**Mr. Paproski:** Don't you believe it.

**Mr. Eldon M. Woolliams (Calgary North):** Well, Mr. Speaker it is always a privilege to follow the Minister of Finance (Mr. Benson).

**An hon. Member:** Why?

**Mr. Woolliams:** Because once every six months or more often, we have the privilege of hearing the minister deliver a lecture. He acts as if he were a university professor delivering a lecture on economics to his students. This still does not solve certain problems. I do not know where the minister obtains his figures, but the figures I have, which appeared in the *Globe and Mail*, have been checked through the Dominion Bureau of Statistics. Let us take a look at the situation in respect of the jobless in Canada or unemployment as it exists today. The Liberals have the ability to come up with their own figures when they are in opposition and again when they form the government. It does not matter how they dish them out.

The minister speaks of the unemployment in the Diefenbaker years. Well, he may have overlooked the fact that at that time unemployment in the United States was at a level of more than 5 per cent. Using his own figures in respect of the United States, the figure has moved from 4.4 per cent to 4.8 per cent. Let us not worry about this for the moment. Let us take a look at what is going on today in Canada. People are not concerned about 1958, 1962, 1963 or from the time the present Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) formed this government. They are worried about the situation today. The total figure in respect of the jobless in Canada is 6.6 per cent of the labour force. This figure has been confirmed by DBS and is quoted in the *Globe and Mail*. This does not take into consideration the number of university students, either graduate or undergraduate, who are now trying to thumb their way across Canada, moving from place to place in an effort to obtain jobs.

I would still wager—and I believe the Minister of Finance if he is fair would admit this—that the total figure in respect of unemployment today is closer to 8 per cent than 6 per cent when one takes into consideration the university students, graduate and undergraduate. What is the situation across the country? In the Maritimes the figure is 10.4 per cent, and that figure has been checked. In Quebec it is 8.9 per cent. In Ontario the figure, which is the lowest in Canada, is 4.6 per cent today. In the three prairie provinces