

Unemployment Measures Lacking

An average of 250,000 new jobs will be needed annually in the next four years. This figure is 2½ times greater than the average provided during each of the last six years.

Again on the same date, in the same city, he said:

One of the objectives of a Liberal government will be to straighten that (unemployment) out.

Some of those who now sit on the treasury benches do not seem to have looked at the subject in the same light, because we have the Minister of Trade and Commerce saying at Vancouver on February 25, 1963:

Canada can never eliminate unemployment.

He went on to say:

People who say that we are going to eliminate unemployment simply don't know the country.

I do not know whether they have since got together on this subject, but since then we have not heard a word from the members of the government, either inside or outside the house, respecting this serious and important matter. In other words, they have lost interest in the situation.

Someone, I think it was the Minister of Mines and Technical Surveys, interjected a moment ago that unemployment is down. That is right. According to the d.b.s. statistics there were 10,000 less unemployed in the month of September as compared with September last year, but in percentages this means that last year we had a figure of 3.9 per cent of the labour force unemployed, while this year it is 3.7 per cent.

Surely the members of the government are not taking credit for something they have not done anything about? Surely the Minister of Mines and Technical Surveys will agree that whatever policies were instituted by the former government are now bearing fruit? It is very brazen on the part of the government to take credit for a very small decline in unemployment, particularly in the face of its inactivity and failure to do anything about unemployment. But we are not in the winter months yet. However, I will deal with that matter as we go along.

What has been done by the government to deal with winter unemployment in particular? First of all, the Minister of Labour made a statement to the house, reported on page 821 of *Hansard* for June 10 of this year. In the body of his statement he said:

The stimulation of employment and the reduction of unemployment are major problems which the government is determined to tackle vigorously.

Then he went on to show how the government intended to tackle those problems vigorously, and the minister set out some nine points. Let us look, Mr. Speaker, at the bright new ideas which this new Liberal government had for tackling winter unemployment. First, training of the unemployed.

That was an unheard of policy. This had never happened before. They had forgotten that we undertook this policy in 1960 in co-operation with the provinces; that we increased our proportion of the cost from 50 to 75 per cent; and that the number of people trained in Canada had multiplied ten times since that time, owing to this policy. But the government said that this was a new and bold step toward eliminating unemployment, and also seasonal unemployment, and they were to do it by increasing from 75 per cent to 90 per cent the federal share.

Second, training of unemployed workers. That involved an amendment to the Technical and Vocational Training Assistance Act. This was again something new, bold and imaginative. All the government did was to take advantage of the facilities provided by the former government, which enabled new schools with a 139,000 student capacity to be built in the country to train young people.

Third, re-employment of older workers. The minister stated at the time that the program would be enlarged upon and all the details worked out. Well, Mr. Speaker, the details have been worked out now and those in charge of policing the matter are having a difficult time. The policing of those who hire workers aged 45 and over for a certain period of time, for which they are recompensed at \$75 a month, is proving to be an almost insurmountable obstacle to overcome. This is nothing but a gimmick. It is a gimmick which probably will not work and which probably will not give benefits to those who actually need them.

Capital assistance for technical training facilities was the fourth idea. This has been going on since 1960, when we passed the Technical and Vocational Training Assistance Act, which has had a great deal of success.

The fifth item was technological change and manpower development. We introduced a bill into this house which never passed owing to the obstruction of the Liberal party which was then in opposition. They have now done away with this bill and are going to tackle the problem through agreements with the provinces.

Another new gimmick was number six, the only new gimmick outside of the hiring of older workers, namely the promotion of winter house building. A \$500 bonus is to be paid if a house is built during the month of December, through March, inclusive. Well, it remains to be seen how much employment this will bring about.

The seventh measure was supplementary federal government winter construction. What does that amount to? The amount of \$7 million is being provided for this. How many new jobs will \$7 million provide in this country of ours?