

## Supply—Finance

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** This matter was put forward by the Minister of Labour during the course of a debate in the house on unemployment. It is difficult to accept the view that it would take four and a half months for this report to be drawn up. It is difficult to believe that its appearance at this time is not coincidental with the fact that parliament is about to prorogue. I say that if before we come back to this house these standards of measurement have been changed the conclusion will be irresistible that they have been changed because the government was not anxious to have the unemployment picture portrayed in the way that it has been portrayed in our country now for almost two decades.

If there is a recommendation made by this interdepartmental committee that a change should take place, no great disservice to the nation will develop if no action is taken on this report until we come back in January, so that parliament or a committee of parliament, or both, may be given an opportunity of determining whether the recommendations made are in keeping with the demands of the situation in our country. If the situation should develop that we are going to come back in the fall, then certainly no great national inconvenience will arise as a result of a delay of two or three months. No national inconvenience or disservice will arise even if we wait until January.

I ask the Prime Minister to give consideration to these matters so that there can be no doubt about the confidence that the Canadian people will have in the new standards, if there are to be new standards, so that they will have no feeling of a lack of confidence in the merit of whatever changes are made, if there are going to be changes made. I hope that if the suggestion made by the interdepartmental committee is simply for a modification of the dominion bureau of statistics technique, namely to increase the number of individuals covered in the sampling process, I hope the Prime Minister will not regard that as an improvement, particularly in the light of the standards recommended by the international labour office. These are standards which the international labour office believes should apply in countries in which there is an honourable and objective effort made to assess the nature of unemployment.

I make this submission to the Prime Minister, agreeing with what the Leader of the Opposition has said, because I feel that in a matter of this importance nothing should be done that would in any way give any justification for a feeling that the standards used by the administration were not the best available standards to measure this most difficult problem.

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**Mr. Diefenbaker:** Mr. Chairman, this discussion on the part of the hon. gentleman is a most interesting one. He said that we do not want new standards of unemployment at this time without parliamentary acquiescence and discussion. I am sure, however, that what we do want is a true standard of measurement for unemployment, not a new one but a true one. I find it most unusual that the hon. gentleman should become so perturbed over this question. A moment ago he said that I referred in the house a few days ago to the national employment service figures in 1957 for the month of June and said that there were 267,000 unemployed.

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** That is right.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** He said the true figure was 150,000.

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** That is right.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** I am glad he has said "That is right". He indicates that he realizes the national employment service figures are far above the actual level of unemployment.

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** Not at all.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** Now he is afraid of the national employment service figures. When I mentioned them the other day he said they were not reliable. They showed over a quarter of a million unemployed, while the actual number of unemployed was 150,000. He proves, by his own words out of his own mouth, that the figures upon which he relies when he desires them to meet his purposes are exaggerated, the relationship being 267 over 150.

Now no one has any desire, I am sure, to exaggerate the amount of unemployment. But the very fact that the hon. gentleman now is concerned, and having the other day deliberately stated that the national employment service figures were not correct, is now very much frightened—

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** Mr. Chairman, the Prime Minister—

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** —by what I am about to say.

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** I never did say that.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** All right, I will read what the hon. gentleman said.

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** Read what I said.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** I will read, if I may, from page 7730 of *Hansard*:

They had been warned in the month of June of 1957, and if my recollection is correct the number of unemployed at that time was over 200,000.

**Mr. Martin (Essex East):** One hundred and fifty thousand.