

The Address—Hon. Paul Martin

a year earlier in the Atlantic region. In the Quebec region employment declined by 62,000 between December and January; in the Ontario region employment decreased by an estimated 62,000 between December and January; in the prairie region employment decreased by 37,000 between December and January; in the Pacific region employment declined seasonally between December and January.

Mr. Speaker, the fact that 545,000 people are out of work in a work force of little more than 6 million continues to present our country with a challenging problem that is not being confronted by this government. The government takes much pleasure in the fact that unemployment in this last reported period was not as high as in the comparable period for the previous year. The fact that 545,000 people are out of work in a work force of 6 million presents this country with an alarming situation. The fact that this has continued since the time this government took office warrants our indicting this government once again for the unrealistic way in which it is tackling the problem.

There are certain comments that one would want to make about the latest release in which we are told that 545,000 Canadians are out of work, which is 132,000 more than in December, 1961. That represents a very significant rise in the unemployment rolls shared by every region in our country. As the release indicates, there were 218,000 fewer jobs than in the month of December. This means that employment declined more than seasonally, this despite the winter works program.

This fall off in the number of jobs between December and January is larger than in any year since this government took office with the exception of 1958 when there was a fall off of 230,000 jobs. I suggest that the increase in unemployment would have been much larger if it were not for the fact that there was an abnormally small growth in the labour force between January of this year and January of last year. The decline in the labour force between December and January was 186,000. This means that approximately twice the average number of people have dropped out of the labour force since this government took office. The only conclusion that can be reached is that out of sheer frustration at not being able to secure jobs people are dropping out of the labour force or are seeking jobs in other countries.

One hundred and forty two thousand workers had been seeking jobs for more than three months in January. This was 34,000 more than in the month of December. If the Canadian economy had continued to

[Mr. Martin (Essex East).]

generate jobs at the same rate as it did during the last five years of Liberal administration, in January of this year there would have been 300,000 more jobs. That is the significant conclusion that the Minister of Labour forgot to underline in his remarks.

Our real concern should not only be for the high level of unemployment but, as I said a while ago, for the stoppage or the relative unprogressive character of our economic growth in Canada at this time. Compare this with a comparable period before this government came into office. From the beginning of 1946 right up until the middle of 1957, when this government took office, our total production in Canada increased at an average rate of 4.6 per cent a year. That was the real increase, after allowing for price changes, in our gross national product. This 4.6 per cent is the average that the former administration sustained over eleven and a half years.

But what has happened since 1957? I say again that our economic growth has slowed down, and no extravagant statement by the government, the Minister of Labour, the Minister of Finance or others as to what the situation is going to be in the balance of this year can conceal the fact that the indications thus far and the assessment of the situation thus far establishes that we have had almost a stoppage in our economic growth.

I wish this government would face the situation with the realism that attended the remarks of the President of the United States last Thursday, when he noted how serious was the situation. He realistically faced into the situation. What did he say? He said that the creation of jobs for young people entering the labour force in the United States, and for older workers being displaced by new technology, had put a major burden on the economy of the United States and its society. Do we hear observations like that from this government? No. We are told that everything is fine, that unemployment is going to be a thing of the past, that its policies would solve this problem. This was reflected in the speech of the Prime Minister (Mr. Diefenbaker) last Saturday night to the young Progressive Conservatives, when he said this government had laid the foundations for present economic prosperity in Canada.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): What better example could I have than the reaction of this government at the present time to this statement? They are applauding a statement that is not in harmony with economic facts at the present time.

I say, let us examine what has happened in this country since 1957. Compare it with