

Having said this, it is hard to reconcile this eloquence with his inability to drive home to his own party in caucus that the only thing standing between the type of existence which he describes so eloquently and the same thing happening today is unemployment insurance. How does he reconcile the fact that his party did its best during the election campaign to destroy the very act which prevented the return of the hungry thirties?

An hon. Member: That is nonsense.

Mr. Mackasey: I have never hidden my concern for unemployment. I have expressed support in the House, as did the former leader of the NDP, when the former minister of finance was here and a discussion took place on selected wage and price controls to endorse it as an alternative to a fiscal and monetary policy which drives 500,000 or 600,000 people out of work. We can no longer return to this type of policy in the future if we ever reduce unemployment to a decent level.

It is very hard to reconcile the position of a party which has now discovered the social implications of mass unemployment with their attitude during the election campaign when they were prepared to destroy the only plan that stood between degradation and at least a decent income while people were waiting for the economy to pick up.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mackasey: The hon. member for Edmonton West (Mr. Lambert) has shown the people how callous he is and what little concern he has for the unemployed. At least the hon. member for Gander-Twillingate, the hon. member from Cape Breton and the hon. member from Newfoundland had the courage of their convictions when they voted for the unemployment insurance amendments, because they know what unemployment is and they know that above all else, the coal miner in Cape Breton and the fisherman in Newfoundland deserve a job; and if it is not there, through no fault of his own, he is entitled to a decent unemployment insurance plan that is not reduced to the level of welfare.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mackasey: If we had listened to the advice of the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) and raised the level of the unemployment insurance qualification to 20 weeks, we would have thrown hundreds or thousands of people in the Maritimes on the welfare rolls. And now the Tory party has suddenly discovered the social effects of unemployment! Only a few months ago, last October, they were prepared to disown the unemployed and, if possible, to rise to power on the backs of the unemployed.

• (2140)

Mr. Alexander: You are less than honest.

Mr. Mackasey: The hon. member for Hamilton West (Mr. Alexander) was the first to disown the very act which, until his speech on Bill C-124, was a monument to his own progressive thinking, to the same extent as it was to the former minister who introduced the bill in the first

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place. I will vote for the budget; and if there is not enough stimulus for the economy, then in a few months the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) can certainly provide more: he is a flexible individual. There is no reason why we should be stuck to one budget a year, as used to be the case. As a matter of fact, the trend now is toward introducing two or three budgets a year.

One of the hon. gentlemen opposite who made a fine speech a few days ago forgot to mention in this debate that the most effective means of reducing unemployment is an across the board reduction in sales tax, as indicated by the econometric model computer in the University of Toronto. Not coupled with personal income tax reductions, which the party opposite endorsed; nor did it include a reduction of the sales tax on building materials. There were three different, fundamental formulae fed into that model. The first was a reduction of sales tax, excluding a personal income tax reduction, the second was a reduction in the building materials tax alone and the third was a personal income tax reduction. The first, a general reduction in sales tax, proved to have the most stimulus on the manufacturing sector. But, in addition, we have reduced personal income tax because it was obvious, as a result of inflation and the growth of the wage rate pattern in the country, as indicated by the Minister of Finance yesterday, that in effect we were overtaxing people.

As a consequence we have reduced income tax and at the same time the Minister of Finance has reduced sales tax on certain commodities. As I say, if we need more stimulus for the economy in a matter of three, four or five months there will be nothing to prevent the Minister of Finance from further reducing sales tax on clothing and on other items in order to assist manufacturing. But it is very hard to reconcile the very emotional concern for the unemployed expressed by the hon. member for Gander-Twillingate tonight on behalf of his party with the callous, indiscriminate and vehement way in which that party tried to destroy the unemployment insurance scheme during the election campaign.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mackasey: Hon. members opposite may holler, but I say to them that one of your own members tonight had the courage to tell you about unemployment. He had the courage to explain to you exactly the degradation of unemployment. He had the courage to tell you its effect on the family unit. He had the courage to remind you of the hungry thirties. And you don't want to be reminded because you know in your hearts that you voted the wrong way on unemployment insurance. You cannot turn the clock back on your action, and sooner or later when the next election comes around, in the Atlantic provinces you will have to answer for your attitude to the unemployed and the unemployment insurance scheme. You cannot have it both ways.

One hon. member who can have it both ways is the hon. gentleman from Gander-Twillingate, because he voted according to his conscience. He knew it would be embarrassing to stand and vote against his own party, but he did