

his rhetoric, the facts are pretty clear. Today's unemployment statistics show that in British Columbia the seasonally adjusted rate is 15.6 per cent. It is 12 per cent in Alberta. These are the highest figures since statistics were first recorded back in 1946.

As a result of its grain transportation legislation, the Government promised to create 157,500 new jobs in western Canada. Instead, contrary to what my friend across the aisle said, the railways are laying off people rather than hiring new people. Why are the railways laying off people? Where are those new jobs that were promised as a result of the dismantling of the Crow?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think I can at least make an observation. A moment ago we heard a spiritual explosion from a member of the New Democratic Party on the beauties and merits and fortune of Manitoba. Now we are told that the West is not doing well. It is obvious that my friends have read the announcement of today's unemployment levels extremely well. We have not heard from anybody from Nova Scotia yet. We have not heard from anybody from Quebec yet, because the figures are good there. We only hear from the provinces where the figures are not as good as they were in the past. Be that as it may—

Mr. Hnatyshyn: This is no laughing matter.

Mr. Pepin: No, but it is an interesting remark, I thought. If you don't like it, lump it.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: It is not interesting. It is a lazy remark. You should be ashamed of yourself.

Mr. Pepin: One of the effects of the western rail transportation legislation is to produce a great element of growth in western rail transportation, leading to the best transportation system in the world. However, because of some of the slow-down in some sectors, it has been found unjustified to keep going at the rate at which plans were made. I am sorry about that. It contributes again to difficulties that we have temporarily, as the Minister of State for Finance said.

Mr. Mazankowski: I hope that the Minister is not implying that it is not proper for Members on this side to represent the concerns and interests of their own provinces and regions. I think one would have to take offence at that. The fact of the matter is that it is the Government's policies over the last four years that have created the mess we are experiencing in western Canada today.

REQUEST THAT GOVERNMENT ACT POSITIVELY

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Vegreville): Mr. Speaker, the National Energy Program has cost western Canada at least 50,000 jobs. The Government's high interest rate policy is bankrupting farmers and costing more jobs. Now the Government is failing to hold the railways to their commitments as far as investment and the creation of jobs are concerned. Today there are 378,000 people unemployed in Alberta and

British Columbia. It is the highest number of people unemployed since 1946.

When will the Government start taking some positive action rather than just spouting the empty promises that we have heard over the last four years, and particularly over the last six months?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I really cannot answer the question because I cannot accept the premise. The Government is not failing in its responsibility with respect to western rail transportation. Where did my friend get that idea? We are fulfilling all of our responsibilities. There are new federal and provincial government programs being developed all of the time. Just in British Columbia, which is part of the West too, what do you see? You see a Port of Vancouver that is booming. You see the Port of Robert's Bank quadrupling. You see the Port of Ridley Island with a billion dollar new investment.

Mr. Mazankowski: There are fewer jobs in transportation today than there were last year.

Mr. Pepin: Of course our friends on the other side select the nasty part of the news every day and then come here and blow on it in order to create the impression that the Government isn't doing anything. Of course our job is a difficult one because when we praise what is happening in Canada and describe some of the good things, of which there are plenty, we are thought by the other side to be propagandists. But we are really describing the reality, and the Speaker stops us.

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INDUSTRIAL AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

DESIGNATION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA ACCORDING TO UNEMPLOYMENT CRITERION

Hon. Allan B. McKinnon (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion. The Government's economic policies have managed to turn British Columbia from a rich province into a have-not province, suffering the highest level of unemployment since the labour force survey was established in 1945.

Would the Minister reconsider his decision which he communicated to me in April of this year that we did not have enough unemployment to qualify for anything but the lowest level, Tier I, of his Industrial and Regional Development Program?

Hon. Ed Lumley (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion): Mr. Speaker, first of all, I do not agree at all with the Hon. Member's premise with respect to this Government's responsibility for the unemployment situation in British Columbia. The Acting Prime Minister today just outlined a few of the major transportation agreements and discussions, and financial contributions that the Government of Canada has made in British Columbia. He did not even talk about