

*Unemployment Measures Lacking*

from the frigate program is very much concerned over the cancellation of the program. When there were indications that the air base in Prince Edward Island was going to be reduced or its whole role perhaps changed, people got worked up. The other day we had a notation here in a debate about the airport at Penhold, Alberta. From the taunts that were thrown at the hon. member for Red Deer by the prairie members of the official opposition, I would assume they were taking the attitude that somehow he was letting the side down by not going along with the plea that the Department of National Defence had a responsibility to extend its plans along these lines, because of the basic jobs that would be offered in the area, even though the program itself might not be defensible as a defence project.

Now, all of us tend to be guilty of this concern with our own area and the jobs there. But there is a fundamental difficulty that we have not had pointed out to us by the government in connection with this problem. Where does the government figure defence spending fits into its economic plan and its pursuit of full employment? It is quite apparent that defence spending gives an underpinning to the economy of the maritimes, and it is very important to the maritimes. The question is, if this defence spending is not effective in terms of defence systems, is it worth while continuing it just to keep that underpinning there? I have heard some dreadful stories about the efficiency of the naval shipyard in Halifax. I have heard some terrible stories about the situation on some of our defence bases, particularly in the maritimes, in terms of the actual work that is carried out. Yet, these bases and these jobs seem to be fundamental to the confidence of the economy in that part of the country.

It seems to me that this is a typical example of our shortsightedness. I think we need these jobs in the maritimes, we need the work for the people there. We should not make the determination on the basis of keeping bases going that might not be useful, but make the determination on the basis of the over-all responsibility of this federal government in this field.

Now, Mr. Speaker, everyone has had the experience, I think, if he has been a member of parliament for a few years, of the kind of pressures that come when the government, or any government agency, indicates that a number of employees are going to be laid off. I know that I get telegrams from Moncton, Transcona, my own constituency, Vancouver and the prairies, in connection with any lay-offs on Canadian National Railways, a government agency. This points to the fact that so many people in Canada, including members

of parliament, respond to this feeling that there is an onus on the government of Canada to keep this kind of thing going in order to keep the job situation from getting worse.

I point out to all hon. members that we are caught in a paradox when we do this kind of thing. When I respond to the word that 100 people have been laid off from the shops at Transcona, I want to know why. The fact of the matter is that we are not sure, and we should be sure, what the total responsibility is that the government will accept in matters such as this. I suggest that in the area of defence spending, particularly on bases, and through bases to the jobs they create, as well as government agencies such as the Canadian National Railways, through the direction of government spending on such things as Department of Transport ships and the kind of contracts the government can let for construction, we should have some kind of master plan to indicate that we are going to approach the matter for the good of the whole country rather than just try to meet each little area problem by some kind of short range solution.

One of the other facets of the unemployment situation for which I think the hon. member for Ontario deserves both credit and—I will not say blame, it is not quite blame—relates to the vocational and technical training program. Certainly, the former minister did not foresee what the consequences were going to be when he introduced this scheme which provided for a contribution towards the capital costs of vocational and technical schools across the country. I do not believe the government ever realized that there was going to be such a tremendous response as there was, particularly from the province of Ontario. As I recall the situation, more federal money was taken up in two years by the provinces than the minister had anticipated would be taken up in ten. No doubt this is a mistake in forecasting, but one of the consequences is that all across Canada, particularly in Ontario today, we have a new group of schools most of which are serving students of the secondary age. I say "age" here rather than secondary school field because they do have a concentration upon composite schools and upon shops.

In many of these schools there has been established an adult training plan to educate people both in the evening and during the day. This is supervised to a degree, or at least planned and encouraged by the national employment service in co-operation with the local school boards. But here again, Mr. Speaker, we have no clear-cut plan. No one really seems to know the efficacy of such training as is taking place. I have talked to a number of people who have taken welding.

[Mr. Fisher.]