

*Alleged Failure to Reduce Unemployment*

workers in our shipyards during this especially tough winter season. The vocational training schools program introduced by the government which I had the honour to support was very successful. The government paid 75 per cent of the construction costs of such schools in my constituency and the schools have been a godsend. The schools are doing good work in helping to train our youngsters who are leaving high school and our adults who have been working for some time. The government of that day did not introduce that program as a mere housekeeping measure. It introduced it in order to help in the fight against unemployment.

• (5:20 p.m.)

To emphasize the seriousness of the present situation I wish to quote the words of a serious and thoughtful Canadian spoken in 1959 when I was sitting in the seats now occupied by the uneasy. I refer to hon. Paul Martin, who played no small part in the policies of the Liberal party. His remarks are reported on page 2135 of *Hansard* for March 23, 1959. He was raising his voice on behalf of the unemployed and said:

I submit there is no problem of greater emergency in our country at this time than the fact that we have almost half a million people out of work. This problem persists in spite of government policy and in spite of government assurances of amelioration.

The difference between the government of that day and the present government is simple. That government had a policy in this field. Today we have no government policy and we have no assurance that the situation will be improved. We have asked the Prime Minister, the Minister of Manpower and Immigration, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, and the Minister of Labour to indicate what programs this government has to deal with unemployment. So far we have had no indication that any program whatever is to be instituted.

To emphasize once more the seriousness and gravity of the situation I wish to turn once more to the words of that tribune of this nation, hon. Paul Martin, who has recently been elevated to the other place. These words are reported at page 646 of *Hansard* for February 2, 1960, and are as follows:

When we talk about this matter—

Unemployment.

—we should recognize that the statistics on unemployment are not made up only of figures; they consist of men and women on whom many others depend for their maintenance and welfare.

[Mr. MacEwan.]

That statement was made when the Liberal party had a heart. If the statistics of that day covered men and women, they cover men and women today to no less an extent. They are the same types of men and women who have similar responsibilities. If unemployment was undesirable and a national emergency then, it still is now. Senator Martin recently said:

Unemployment makes a man seem useless, not wanted, without a country; it makes a man live in fear and from fear springs hate.

Those words apply forcefully today and lead to this question. At what point did widespread unemployment cease to concern members of the party opposite? That question has been asked before, and I ask it again now. The former minister of finance has said on a number of occasions that we can tolerate a certain amount of unemployment as an antidote to inflation. But now we have both unemployment and inflation. We have unemployment because the government has siphoned off too large a portion of the national income from the private sector. The construction industry, which in normal years employs one million Canadians, has been starved by the government because the tax on building materials has put housing beyond the reach of middle-income Canadians.

Right now a tug of war is taking place between the Minister of Transport and the Minister of Finance. It is the public that will suffer or benefit from the result. We shall have to wait and see whether the Minister of Transport and his boys can persuade the cabinet to come over on their side. Although I have never taken sides as between these ministers, I hope the Minister of Transport wins.

The government's policies have produced unemployment. Its incentive destroying taxes have placed enterprise in a strait-jacket.

I share a problem with many other hon. members in that there are homes in my riding where the doors have been darkened by the spectre of unemployment since this government took office. Across the less-favoured regions of this vast nation gallop the twin spectres of unemployment and inflation. They are two horsemen of the Apocalypse and are hotly pursued by the third horseman, the former secretary of state who has written a book. I apologize; I should have said horsewoman. Her work is a valuable addition to the library of Liberal literature. We had Walter Gordon's contribution, "Troubled Canada", and now we have the postscript describing the cabinet as a gilded cage. But the present cabinet is a cage without gilding.