

*Unemployment Measures Lacking*

relative optimism that I think may be unfortunate in that it is going to cause us to set aside some of our concern and worry. In other words, the edge has been taken off something that we were very conscious of right up until last spring.

In many ways I think that this callousness is bred right into the kind of society we have today. When you have a lot of people with good incomes who are enjoying a high material standard of living and who can see progress in terms of their leisure time activities and the amount of money they have to spend on cottages, vacations and dress, it seems it is very easy to forget the growing number of people in Canada who are becoming almost unemployable. It is also very easy to forget those pockets in the country where it does not seem that any of the existing programs are really going to help.

We as a party have contended for a number of years in the house that some cabinet minister needed to accept the basic responsibility for employment measures that would meet the situation. It has been my argument that it should be the Minister of Labour (Mr. MacEachen). I have always thought it regrettable that this portfolio has been considered a minor post and that the two big posts of power in the government relating to these matters have tended to be finance and trade and commerce.

We have an indication from the new government that the Department of Industry is to play a fundamental role in this field. Here again we are not exactly sure just how much stature that department is going to have, because while it is going to build up a new administrative framework of a very ambitious kind we also know that the Department of Labour is expanding its administration in order to meet other parts of the unemployment problem.

We really have no indication of the government's detailed plan in the field. This is particularly noticeable as far as we are concerned in terms of the analysis of unemployment that one finds made today by economists. They mark out structural unemployment, technological unemployment, cyclical unemployment, seasonal unemployment, short term unemployment, social unemployment, which has existed because of the difficulty in moving and the lack of mobility, and frictional unemployment. It does not really matter how you define or classify these various kinds of unemployment. The point is that it is a complex matter and that because of the regional nature of our economy and the winter season it has to be analysed as a complex. It seems to us that the response of the government needs to be co-ordinated and to be very clear,

and under the direction of one person who is responsible and can answer to the house.

It is for this reason that we welcome the opportunity to have a discussion of the matter. We hope that as a result of the discussion we will have a statement, not from the Minister of Labour necessarily indicating perhaps that it is his responsibility but from the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) indicating where the government is planning to go. I think that the hon. member for Ontario and the official opposition may be expecting too much too soon in terms of measures to meet unemployment over all. I think that the suspicions he and his party have in their minds are naturally larger than ours partly because they have suffered so recently the frustration of losing power, but nevertheless this is very understandable when we consider the slow pace at which the government is moving with regard to the Canada development corporation.

We have had a disappearance of what seemed to be an indication in the thinking of the Prime Minister when he was leader of the opposition of something that is intrinsic to our approach to the whole problem, namely that the government through welfare services has an opportunity and a responsibility to put the kind of floor or base under the economy, and to extend it, that will encourage the kind of spending that is one of the great factors in cutting down unemployment. One of the remarkable facts that the remaining free enterprisers, who are really basic and very few today, just ignore is that the tremendous swings we used to get in unemployment have largely disappeared. Every reputable analyst I have encountered gives a great deal of the credit to social security systems, and there is no indication that Canada has overspent on its social security. In fact, one of our arguments is that a medicare scheme would be a great stimulus to the economy. We feel that the welfare state is a state that gives a basic assurance that the neglected, the poor and those who are short of talents and opportunities will not only have some kind of a base but will be living in an economy that will have a guaranteed basic level. We have had no indication from the government, however, with regard to where the whole welfare program, such things as the pension plan and medicare, may fit into their total economic approach to the problems of today.

There is another aspect of the unemployment situation that would be funny if it were not so paradoxical. I can point this up best by the reaction to the announcement in connection with the frigate program. Everyone who comes from an area where there is a shipyard that likely would have prospered