

*Unemployment Measures Lacking*

said that this situation was an indictment of our society. I should like the hon. member who is now a member of the government, to note these words because they are words he could very usefully repeat to his colleagues in the cabinet now. At that time he said:

I say to this government, the same vigour that it demonstrated in the course of the elections, when it talked of unemployment, it ought now to demonstrate when it comes to consider what should be done about it.

The chickens are indeed coming home to roost, Mr. Speaker. I could use word for word the same flamboyant epithets which the Secretary of State for External Affairs was so fond of using when he sat on this side of the house to castigate the lack of action on the part of the government then. Let him now instigate action on the part of the government of which he is a member, that very government which rode into office on the promise that they would rid the country of its principal problem, unemployment. What have they done? In terms of effects and results they have done just about nothing.

With regard to the winter works program, the hon. member for Ontario (Mr. Starr) this afternoon related how that program had been initiated by the previous administration, how it had been ridiculed by members of the opposition at that time, how a great number, perhaps a majority of municipalities throughout the country availed themselves of its provisions, and how it had created year after year since its implementation hundreds of thousands of new jobs for Canadians. This one measure initiated by the previous government to combat unemployment achieved striking and complete success and has borne rich fruit for the citizens of Canada.

Yet at that time the hon. member for Essex East could find no other words to describe that splendid and successful program than "that anaemic child of the government". It might have been anaemic in the mind of the hon. member, but certainly in comparison with some of the measures the present government said they would implement, and never have, it was indeed a vigorous child that produced hundreds of thousands of new jobs. Some hon. members on the other side scoff at that. They do not seem to believe. Let them cite one single measure introduced by them which has produced hundreds of thousands of new jobs for Canadians. They have not produced a single one as far as I know.

I could go on at some length recounting the utterances of members of the government at the time they were in opposition with regard to the measures they would propose when they came into power. Again, on the 2nd of February, 1960, the hon. member for Essex East made certain suggestions. For

[Mr. Martineau.]

instance, he said that responsibility for unemployment must be transferred from the Department of Labour to the government as a whole, particularly to the Department of Finance, including the Bank of Canada, under a vigorous ministerial chairmanship.

I can understand why the government has discarded this proposal when one considers the dismal failure of the budgetary proposals made by the Minister of Finance to resuscitate, as he said, the Canadian economy. That is one proposal which members then in the opposition insisted upon strongly in order to restore our economy; but today there is not the slightest inkling that the government is anywhere near adopting such a proposal.

The opposition of that day said: Let us adopt a national advisory board on economic development. They have established something like that, but it has not produced any jobs yet. I can quote as my authority none other than the speaker who preceded me, the hon. member for Îles-de-la-Madeleine (Mr. Sauve).

Another proposal made by the Secretary of State for External Affairs was to set up a special parliamentary committee to deal with the problem of unemployment, and assess the facts. When some of the members now in the opposition propose the setting up of a parliamentary committee to deal with unemployment the only thing we hear is, "No, that is no good, because as the opposition you will use it in a partisan way,"—as if the hon. member for Essex East on that day had any other idea than to use the committee precisely in a political way. The proof of that is that today the government refuses to set up such a committee.

The opposition of that day were very fertile and prolific in proposing solutions to the problem. They said: Let us call a federal-provincial conference on unemployment. I know a federal-provincial conference has been called, but it is not to deal with employment or unemployment. It is to deal with relations between the provinces and the federal government, which have reached a very low ebb indeed since the 22nd of April last.

Here is another proposal made at that time which I commend especially to members of the cabinet. It was proposed by no other authority than the hon. member for Essex East that a leading businessman be appointed to provide leadership in supplying jobs. I think that would be a very good proposal and I have the name of a leading businessman, a chartered accountant by profession, to suggest. He is the present Minister of Finance. In a private capacity I think he could perhaps do a lot better than he has done as Minister