

*Proposed Committee on Unemployment*

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I should simply like to refer to the analogy that was employed last evening by the hon. member for Vancouver East when he referred to the manner in which the present Minister of Trade and Commerce had solved particular difficulties that had arisen at one time in construction work. He paid what I thought was a very fine tribute to the abilities and the skill of the Acting Prime Minister (Mr. Howe), as an engineer, and then he said he hoped that the Acting Prime Minister would apply those lessons that he has learned to the solution of the problems that we have facing us today. All I can say, Mr. Speaker, is that it is my impression that few people have learned the lessons of their experience and know better how to apply them than the Acting Prime Minister in this house. I can assure the hon. member that it does not require his suggestion to have the Minister of Trade and Commerce and his colleagues apply to the solution of this problem and the other serious problems that from time to time face the people of Canada and the government of Canada the experiences and the knowledge and the abilities that they have found from their long and useful life in this country in many fields, and not the least their contribution to the public life of this country as members of the government.

**Hon. George A. Drew (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, I had hoped this afternoon when the hon. member for Temiscouata (Mr. Pouliot) rose that it was for the purpose of explaining that he had been gravely in the wrong yesterday and that he was asking to have expunged from the record the statement which should never have been made by any hon. member at any time in this house. The hon. member for Temiscouata rose on a question of privilege, and objected to a statement that had been made in this house which represented nothing more than a debatable point of view but left untouched and still on the record the most shameless, unjustified and improper statement that has been made in this house since confederation. Let me read what the hon. member said, as reported at page 2132 of *Hansard*:

I remember when Mr. Bennett was the leader of the government. Before he came to that position he himself created unemployment, and for a good reason. He and his chief organizer in 1929—the year that has been referred to by the hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker)—each subscribed \$350,000 to the electoral funds and they invested that money in brokers' offices. The leader of the Conservative party—it was not progressive at that time—used to say: "Conditions are bad; we have unemployment, but I will cure that." Every time he spoke of unemployment and said that conditions were bad in this country, the stocks were

getting lower and lower and he was making more money because he was speculating on the fall in price. Finally, when he had realized an amount which was as much as his investment, he succeeded. He used that money to win the election.

**Mr. Rowe:** Shame!

**Mr. Drew:** Mr. Speaker, it is difficult within moderate terms to refer to a statement of that kind reflecting on an earlier prime minister of Canada. That is a gross, untrue and malicious suggestion, without an atom of foundation, against a former prime minister and an associate of his who was a member of the other house of the Canadian parliament.

It is one of the great, cherished and priceless possessions of this democracy of ours that we can disagree in political affairs and yet respect the position of prime minister, which is the highest office in the gift of the people of Canada. If there was an inappropriate time for those malicious, unfounded and untrue remarks to be made, it was at a time when we have so recently been reminded of the extent to which the members of this house are prepared to go in wholehearted sincerity in paying their tribute, without any difference of party, to the office of prime minister, which is an office occupied by a man chosen by the people of Canada in a free vote.

Here in this very chamber, within recent days, we have seen an expression of that uniform respect for the high office of prime minister by which we not only indicated our respect for the institution, but also sought to extend to other countries a clearer understanding of our concept of a decent democracy.

Certainly there were disagreements with the views held by the prime minister of that time, as there are differences and very great differences of opinion as to the views held by the present Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent). But, Mr. Speaker, it has been customary to have some regard to the fact that allegations that would not have been made while a person is alive will not be made when that person is no longer here to answer them and deal with them. If the hon. member had displayed the courtesy and the courage to make statements of that kind when these men were alive and to leave the implication which he left, then I am not in any doubt about the way in which that would have been dealt with if the man against whom these allegations were made had been here in this house to deal with them. Nor am I in any doubt about the way they would have been dealt with by the member of the other house of this parliament if those statements had been made outside, where they were not under the protection of this House of Commons.