

*Interim Supply*

**Mr. Bell (Saint John-Albert):** You dropped Mr. St. Laurent fast enough in 1957; you did not even go to the station to meet him.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** For whom the bell tolls, Mr. Chairman. The hon. gentleman's intervention does not appear to have very much to do with interim supply which the Minister of Finance is so anxious to get through.

Here is what the Prime Minister is telling us:

And we shall never be satisfied to see one part of the country develop and another lag behind.

Well, what do these figures show? These figures show that practically the whole of that increase between January and February in the number of unemployed was in the province of Quebec and the Atlantic provinces. Are they not lagging behind, or what do these words mean? It is a case of just words, words, words.

That was allowed to happen in the past—

I remind the hon. member for Saint John-Albert of these great promises they made to increase coal production and the complaints that were made because Mr. St. Laurent refused to promise to increase it. What has happened to coal production? It has gone down every year and three more mines are going to close as soon as the Rand commission has concluded its hearings.

**Mr. Bell (Saint John-Albert):** How about coal production in New Brunswick? Coal production in New Brunswick is up.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** Production in New Brunswick may be up, but production in Nova Scotia is down many, many times any small increase there may have been in New Brunswick.

That was allowed to happen in the past, and it created regional problems which it will take great efforts to solve.

It certainly will. It will take great efforts to solve them. I should like to remind the Minister of Labour that it will take efforts, not just words.

The new national policy demands that the development of the future be carried out so as to remove inequalities of opportunity for Canadians living in various parts of our nation.

I say today, sir—

**Mr. Bigg:** Any objection to that?

**Mr. Pickersgill:** I certainly have no objection to it. There was a great deal done when we were in office to remove these inequalities. In the three years the hon. gentlemen have been in office, the condition of the eastern part of the province of Quebec and the condition of the Atlantic provinces has lagged much more behind the rest of the country than at any other time in recent history.

[Mr. Pickersgill.]

**Mr. Denis:** Because they had three Tory premiers instead of one.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** Exactly. Then, he goes on to talk about the miracle of confederation, but I do not think I will read that because the Minister of Finance would object and I think, sir, it would be out of order. It is the usual distortion of history, I might add.

Then, we come to the Prime Minister's pronouncement, the solution for the problem of unemployment. He could not bother to tell us here in the house. That did not matter. This is what the Prime Minister had to say over the air.

And as you know, there was the unemployment problem which we inherited.

What did they inherit? Here are the figures, sir. Here are the figures for January and February of 1957, the last year we were in office. The dominion bureau of statistics figure for January was 305,000; February, 326,000. What are those figures today? They are almost twice as high. Now, that is the problem. They were supposed to have inherited a depression from us and they claim now they are out of the recession and in a boom. Yet the boom brings them twice as many unemployed as the so-called depression that they inherited. The plain fact of the matter is, Mr. Chairman, and all the distortions of the Minister of Finance will never change it, that the economy of this country was in a boom condition on June 21, 1957. The decline did not begin until two or three months after the hon. gentlemen took office. The unhappy part of it is that this figure of 555,000 unemployed is only 8,000 less than it was in February, 1958 when the hon. gentlemen said they were at the depths of this recession. The dominion bureau of statistics figure in February, 1958 was 563,000 and today it is 555,000, only 8,000 less. It really means there is clearly no difference at all.

**Mr. Pallett:** There are a quarter of a million more people employed.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** No, there are not. There are some more employed than there were two years ago but not a quarter of a million. There are 37,000 fewer than there were a year ago, and this is very worrying because a year ago—

**Mr. Starr:** There are 116,000 more employed than a year ago February. Look at the figures in the dominion bureau of statistics release.

**Mr. Pickersgill:** The percentage of the labour force that is unemployed today is higher than it was a year ago.