sympathy for the present Minister of Labour (Mr. Gregg). There is an old saying which goes something like this: "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown". One has to remember how long the Minister of Labour has been patiently sitting in his place having extra thorns added to his crown every once in a while. It is not my intention to add to his difficulties today.

It is my intention to discuss briefly the two proposals which were set forth in the amendment moved by the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam (Mr. Regier) on behalf of the C.C.F. party. On the 16th of March the hon. member moved an amendment which called for two specific lines of action by this government. The first part of the amendment called for the government to implement the pledge it made in 1945 in what are commonly known as the green book proposals, that it would take full responsibility for the care of the unemployed.

I shall not devote much time to that part of the proposal because it has already been well covered, except to point out that with regard to those who are not eligible for unemployment insurance there is certainly an urgent need for this government to come to the aid of the municipalities which are obliged to struggle with that problem. Before this debate winds up I hope some member of the government—either the Minister of Labour or someone else speaking for the government—will be able to tell this house what they intend to do with respect to this question. I have no doubt that it will be one of the questions which will be discussed at the dominion-provincial conference to take place in the next few weeks, and I hope that out of it will come something which will assure the municipalities that they will not be left in the position of having to take the responsibility of caring for those who are unemployed by virtue of the policies of the federal government.

I should like to devote a little time to the second proposition in our amendment, calling for a public investment program and for economic development. In order to make my remarks as constructive as possible, I should like to set out first of all that I believe the government is missing the boat by going along with the decision of Trans-Canada Pipe Lines Limited, which apparently has decided not to proceed with the construction of the pipe line this year. According to a press dispatch of March 18, as it appears in the Winnipeg *Free Press,* we are informed as follows:

> Decision by the directors of Trans-Canada Pipe Lines to bring the negotiations to an end was announced Thursday afternoon by N. E. Tanner, Calgary, president of the company.

Then it goes on to give the reasons:

> A flat refusal by the world's second largest oil company to sell Alberta gas to Trans-Canada Pipe Lines brought the negotiations with the federal government's industrial development bank to an end. The oil company refused to be a party to supplying oil to a pipe line company,—

It should be "gas" there, I imagine:

> —which under the terms of the I.D.B. proposition could be controlled by the Canadian government.

Then it goes on to say:

> The oil company, Canadian Gulf Oil, a subsidiary of the huge Gulf Oil Corp. of Pittsburgh, refused to sign as a supplier, despite a personal last minute appeal by Right Hon. C. D. Howe, Minister of Trade and Commerce. Mr. Howe reportedly intervened this week to try to persuade Gulf Oil to agree to supply oil but the appeal was flatly rejected and ended in bitter argument over long-distance telephone.

I have no way of knowing the accuracy of that report. Certainly it has not been denied. It appears that the government has now resigned itself to the position that if the pipe-line company in question will not proceed with building the pipe line, then the matter rests there. Certainly here is a clear case where the federal government could proceed on its own and build the pipe line as a public utility, if not the whole distance into eastern Canada then certainly as far as Winnipeg this year. There may be some doubt as to the readiness of consumers in Montreal, Toronto or other eastern cities to buy the gas that may be available. There may be some doubt as to whether the price can be made competitive with other sources of supply. But certainly as far as the situation east to Winnipeg is concerned, there is no doubt that the supply of gas would be welcomed by both the domestic users and those who are in industry.

I see no reason at all why the Canadian government should sit back and wait for a private corporation to proceed with a project of this nature when, in the first place, I believe the Canadian government should have taken the initiative to construct such a pipe line and use it as a public utility, making it available to private concerns, provincial governments and municipalities.

If we can foresee in the future a network distribution of natural gas, both in western and eastern Canada, in which the provincial governments and the municipalities are to participate—and I believe that is what is going to happen—then certainly it would be a protection to those provincial governments and to the municipalities concerned if the pipe line were a publicly-owned utility under the control of the federal government, free to be used by all those who wished to use it as a common carrier, and subject to the regulations of this parliament.