

Unemployment

problem will be worked out at the April conference. In order to illustrate just how he has tried to create that impression in the minds of the people, I should like to quote his answer to two questions which I put to him in this house, the first of which was on March 10. The question, as reported at page 1882 of *Hansard* for that date, reads as follows:

Would the Prime Minister advise the house what attempts were made, if any, to assemble an immediate conference with the provinces to deal with the present critical unemployment situation?

The Prime Minister's answer was:
There were none made, Mr. Speaker.

I asked the following supplementary question:

Does the Prime Minister believe that a preliminary conference held later in April and a dominion-provincial conference held later in the year will suffice to deal adequately with today's critical unemployment situation?

Here is the answer the Prime Minister gave:

The Prime Minister's attitude is that that will be the opportunity to deal with this important problem.

The Prime Minister knew quite well that this important problem would not and could not be dealt with at that time because that will be a planning conference, pure and simple. Yet, that is what the Prime Minister said, to try to mislead the people into believing that this problem was going to be dealt with at the April 26 conference. This illustrates the attitude of the Prime Minister who, the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Martin) has just told us so piously, is anxious to do something to clean up this unemployment problem; that is his attitude in dealing with this critical problem that involves the lives and welfare of many thousands of Canadians. The Prime Minister has done nothing more or less than shilly-shally and shadow box with this problem. Yet the Minister of National Health and Welfare has declared so piously, practically with his hands folded in front of his vest, that no one is more anxious than the Prime Minister to solve the unemployment problem. I will bet you that at this moment in the Chateau Laurier the Prime Minister is probably standing up beside the president of the Liberal federation and saying that no one is more anxious to solve the problem of unemployment than are the Prime Minister and this government. The faithful will cheer and shout and have a whale of a time, but that is not doing one thing to solve this unemployment problem.

I might illustrate the interest of the Liberal party in unemployment by saying that a friend of mine in the house has just passed me

[Mr. Hees.]

a note informing me that there are only 17 Liberals who are sufficiently interested in the problems of their constituents to be in the house at the time this vitally important matter is being discussed.

Mr. Weir: There are less than 10 Tories.

Mr. Hees: That is the example which the Prime Minister and the rest of the cabinet are setting to the country, 17 Liberals who are interested enough to listen to the problems of the people for whom they are supposed to be legislating.

Now, Mr. Speaker, on the following day, March 11, I asked the Prime Minister the following question as recorded at page 1928 of *Hansard*:

In view of the fact that the Prime Minister's decision not to call an immediate conference on unemployment is depriving many thousands of Canadians who have no jobs or means of support of any chance of a solution of their problems, would the Prime Minister not reconsider his decision and call an immediate conference?

Then the Prime Minister answered:

I cannot agree with the premises of the hon. member's question as a basis for reconsideration.

There is gobbledygook with a great big "g". What kind of an answer is that to the 600,000 unemployed people in Canada who desperately want an unemployment conference to be called with the provinces at the present time to deal with their problem? What kind of an answer is that? I ask the Minister of National Health and Welfare, is that a constructive answer? No, he shakes his head, and he admits it is not.

Mr. Martin: No.

Mr. Hees: It is simply the kind of gobbledygook in which this government has been dealing for years.

Mr. Martin: I rise on a point of order.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The Minister of National Health and Welfare is rising on a point of order.

Mr. Hees: This will be interesting.

Mr. Martin: My hon. friend said that when I shook my head I was agreeing with what he said. Under the rules of this house my hon. friend has no right to make such an assumption. I was shaking my head because of the wholly irresponsible statements the hon. gentleman was making.

Mr. Hees: I would be very anxious to have the Minister of National Health and Welfare explain why my statement was wholly irresponsible.

Mr. Martin: Because my hon. friend has implied throughout his speech that the head