

Unemployment is usually at a minimum in September - rises to a peak in the late winter.

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An address by the Minister of Public Works, Mr. Robert Winters, delivered at the Golden Anniversary Convention meeting of the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities, Halifax, N.S., September 1, 1955.

I think it is true to say that ever since the last Great Depression we Canadians, in private life and in government, have been determined to do everything practical to prevent another. In government, at the national level, we have developed improved economic weapons, and we have not hesitated to use them. For example, we have strengthened the economy with such basic supports as Unemployment Insurance, Family Allowance and pensions for the aged. We have learned to make more effective use of fiscal, monetary and credit policy to reduce the inevitable ups and downs of a free economy. We have used the means available to modern government to create the sort of climate in which this free economy can prosper.

Furthermore, the Federal Government has made important contributions to national development at times and in places which would most effectively stimulate the economy. These contributions have included a stronger housing policy than ever before; and an extensive Trans-Canada Highway programme, not to mention other government capital outlays on various types of public works.

All this is, in a way, part of the endless story of man's conquest of this northern land, part of man's endless experiment in learning to live in a country that has perhaps more than its share of difficulties for living. We have laid siege to our objective on a broad front and we have encountered individual pockets of resistance and salients that yield harder than other parts of the front. I should like today to talk about one of the most stubborn of these salients - about winter unemployment.

This year has brought us a graphic illustration of this problem. On March 19th, there were 401,000 Canadians without jobs and looking for work - nearly 7½ per cent of the labour force. On May 21, this figure had dropped to 213,000 or slightly less than four per cent of the labour force. On June 18, the figure was down to 157,000, slightly less than three per cent.

It is expected that by mid-September the number of persons without jobs seeking work will have dropped to a little more than 2 per cent of the labour force.