

The Address—Mr. W. J. Browne

the hon. member for Villeneuve (Mr. Dumas) on the admirable way in which, in two languages, he seconded the motion.

I was especially interested in the description of life in that strange province of Saskatchewan given by the mover of the resolution. It was interesting to hear of the busy ranches, the golden grain gleaming in the late summer sun, and all the happy, contented homes, where the people live long lives of Arcadian simplicity. But I think hon. members will agree that they had a rude awakening when the hon. member for Maple Creek (Mr. Studer) rose and said that taxes in that province were so high he was considering selling his farm, and recommended that the portion of the province west of the third meridian should be given to Alberta and the portion east of the third meridian should be given to Manitoba.

The hon. member for Villeneuve told us how rich and varied were the resources of his constituency, and painted a picture of giant ore carriers sailing up the deepened St. Lawrence with iron ore from the Quebec-Labrador mines to smelters that would be established in Quebec. That brought no applause from hon. members from the maritime provinces, because already established at Sydney are great blast furnaces which have been in operation for fifty years, where the coal from Sydney is used to smelt iron ore that comes from Bell island in Newfoundland, while the limestone from the west coast of Newfoundland is also brought in to help out in the process.

Iron is considered the most necessary element in the establishment and development of industry; and today Canada seems to be the richest country in the world in that respect. In addition to the iron ore mines of Bell island, which are capable of almost unlimited expansion, we have the new workings at Steep Rock, as well as the recent discoveries on the Quebec-Labrador boundary. There should be no reason why in addition to the blast furnaces in Sydney we could not have other blast furnaces in Quebec and Ontario. The future of Canada seems very bright with such large supplies of iron ore within our boundaries, particularly since the supplies of the United States in Minnesota appear to be on the verge of petering out.

The hon. member for Charlotte (Mr. Stuart) complained, as I have heard him complain before, about the indifference and neglect which the maritimes have suffered from the central provinces. He stated, as I am quite sure is the fact, that the goods purchased by the maritimes from the central provinces far exceed in value the goods which the central provinces buy from the maritimes.

[Mr. Browne (St. John's West).]

Yet in many sections of the maritimes, as those who have travelled there know, particularly in the country districts, there are homes that have an air of solid comfort.

There have been many interesting speeches and many very fine speeches during this debate, and one is tempted to discuss many subjects that have been brought to light. For example, the right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) went to a great deal of trouble to give a detailed analysis of the unemployment situation which the government have been trying to minimize. He also gave us the work projects in hand for the construction season of 1950. However, I am very much puzzled by the various statements we have heard from members of the government. Listening to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Gardiner) and the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Howe) one would not think there was any great amount of unemployment in the country; but the figures show differently. Unemployment insurance paid out for the month of December was equal to that paid out for April of last year, a little over \$7 million; but in January the amount paid out almost equalled the amount received in insurance premiums, nearly \$12 million. So we had the spectacle of the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Martin), acting in the absence of the Minister of Labour (Mr. Mitchell), bringing in a bill and beseeching hon. members to let him rush it through the house as quickly as possible because so many people were out of employment and had been without work for so long that they had exhausted all the benefits to which they were entitled, and it was necessary to extend the benefits until April 30 of this year and provide that in future years those benefits should be extended for three months beyond January 1.

Is it not paradoxical that in this great, rich country, where the grain elevators are filled to overflowing with wheat, where there are surpluses at various seasons of the year in some commodities—even at the moment in butter, cheese, eggs and bacon—unsold and sometimes unsalable, that there should be 400,000 people receiving unemployment insurance? These people, because of the small amount received in proportion to their ordinary earnings, must be living at a reduced level. I ask hon. members of the government to give serious consideration to that paradox. It seems to me to be an extremely serious situation, which unemployment insurance does not cure. Public works on a large scale will not cure it either, because those are only temporary expedients and do nothing to eliminate the cause.