

*Employment Commission*

working through the provinces and the municipalities. That is the method we have followed in testing the feasibility of securing this type of information. It may be that we shall discover that some information which it is important that we should obtain cannot be secured in that way. I think the commission itself, as we proceed, will be able to judge of the nature of the sources of information which can now be utilized. I fully appreciate the importance of securing information regarding those who are unemployed but not on relief. Perhaps it will satisfy my hon. friend from Winnipeg North Centre if I tell him that I appreciate its importance and will certainly look into ways and means of obtaining that additional information. I know of no reason why that additional duty might not be imposed upon the commission if we so desired.

Mr. HEAPS: Would the minister object to the addition of a few words which might give them that right to make a registration of all those unemployed? In subsection (a) of section 6 the matter is not so difficult, because we know the numbers who are on relief to-day. A few days ago the minister was able to give the house and the committee, the number, almost to the last individual, in receipt of relief. Now it is a question of classifying them. We know that everyone on relief is practically unemployed. In some cases, as the minister has pointed out, some are unemployable. For a number of reasons these cases may have been dealt with by the municipalities or by the social welfare people, and to-day they are in the ranks of relief recipients. It would be a comparatively easy task, with the aid of the employment agencies scattered throughout the country, to have some registration of those out of work, take place in a given week, so that we might have an idea of the number, and also of the amount of reserve labour power we have in Canada. If there is no objection I should like the minister to add a few words to section 6, to the effect that a national registration or classification of persons unemployed and not on relief be made.

Mr. ROGERS: That is covered now. They are unemployed and on relief; they would not be on relief if they were not unemployed.

Mr. HEAPS: But I am asking that the unemployed who are not on relief be registered. Those on relief are unemployed now.

Miss MACPHAIL: But there are plenty of people unemployed who are not on relief. What about the coupon clippers?

(Mr. Rogers.)

Mr. ROGERS: The difficulty is in securing accurate information. So far as the relief rolls are concerned, one can be reasonably certain of accuracy in the figures because the information itself is based upon the registration of those who receive relief. But my hon. friend will acknowledge that what we desire particularly in relation to these unemployment statistics is something that will be accurate. One may assume that most of those who are unemployed will register at some employment bureau, but there is little doubt that because of the extraordinary conditions that have prevailed in the past few years many of the unemployed have not registered at employment offices for the simple reason that they know something of the difficulty of finding employment and feel that it will be futile to register at this time. If that information cannot be secured at the employment bureau and if it does not exist at the relief offices in the various municipalities, the only way in which it can be secured is by compulsory registration, and I should hesitate to impose that duty upon the commission at this time. I assure my hon. friend that I appreciate the importance of securing that information, but I doubt whether we should impose that duty upon the commission.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: With regard to the suggestion I made a little while ago about charging the commission with the duty of seeking the causes, either local or general, of unemployment, does it not seem reasonable that that should be done?

Mr. ROGERS: With all deference to the hon. gentleman, I remember reading not long ago a statement by Gide, the French economist, in which he stated that no less than 400 separate explanations had been given for cyclical depressions.

An hon. MEMBER: Five hundred.

Mr. ROGERS: Someone suggests five hundred. At any rate it is obvious that there have been many and various explanations of these periodical disturbances in industrial and commercial activity. I do not think this commission would spend its time usefully in seeking to discover a cause; that is oversimplifying the problem in the first place. I do not think anyone would suggest that there is one cause; there is a complexity of causes.

Mr. BENNETT: There was before the election.

Mr. ROGERS: Not even before the election.

Mr. HEAPS: The cause was removed.