

*Unemployment*

In regard to this particular subject the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) has not indicated any views other than those which have been expressed on other occasions. I wish to leave no uncertainty about the fact that we believe there are things that can and should be done to meet this situation, within the framework of our economy and under the authority which the government already possesses. A number of those things have been mentioned, some of them today. A number of those things have been discussed during the period this debate has been taking place. But, Mr. Speaker, I have heard from the government no answer which would indicate what their intentions are with regard to these various industrial and other activities where unemployment is a reality.

I regret that anyone would suggest that a discussion on unemployment is an attempt to undermine confidence. If there is any attempt to undermine confidence on that basis, then of course it must come from the agency of the government which gives the figures. The figures that have been used are given by the dominion bureau of statistics. Surely there is no suggestion that the dominion bureau of statistics is deliberately seeking to undermine public confidence. After all, it is a statistical agency which we believe has been giving us reliable information within the pattern it has established with regard to these and other matters. The interpretation to be placed upon those figures is for the members of this house and the public of Canada.

Many of us know where there is unemployment. There is unemployment in the textile industry, in the electrical industry and in other industries that have already been under discussion. There is unemployment in the various servicing agencies which ordinarily would be called upon to deal with the movement of food products which today are not being sold to the same extent they have been sold on other occasions. We know where this unemployment is; we know that from records that are available to us. Far from there being any suggestion that this discussion seeks to undermine confidence, may I say that we would indeed be open to criticism if we failed to bring forward the facts that are produced by agencies of the government set up for that purpose, and to seek action by the government to deal in some way with a situation which is apparent from a study of those very figures.

I want to refer to one other industry with regard to which figures have been given just within these past few days, in order to show the nature of the problem. We have in this

[Mr. Drew.]

country an extremely efficient rubber footwear industry. Last year in Canada 3,260,952 pairs of rubber footwear were sold. Our industry is capable of taking care of our own requirements with rubber footwear of high quality, and of producing for export large numbers of rubber shoes as well. The export trade in rubber footwear has diminished seriously. In 1947 we exported two million pairs. Last year we exported only 15,000 pairs. Of the 3,260,952 pairs sold in Canada last year, 1,062,362 pairs were imported.

Again, let us not have any suggestion that the moment you mention these figures you are urging that there should not be trade. On the contrary, no argument of that kind is being made. But let us see what happened. Of those 1,062,362 pairs, 717,202 pairs came from Hong Kong. The information is that those shoes—that is the 717,202 pairs that came from Hong Kong—arrived here at a cost of 64 cents a pair as compared with a cost of \$1.90 a pair for a comparable Canadian product. You do not have to look far to find out what the problem is there.

**Mr. Croll:** But in his finding the judge said, did he not, that there was no competition in the business, and that they maintained prices? That is what he said.

**Mr. Drew:** We are not dealing with anything of the kind to which the hon. member has referred, and he is well aware of that fact. He is also well aware of the fact that there was no suggestion of any inaccuracy in the cost figures; and I am referring to cost figures. The hon. member indicates that he agrees with what I have said. Since he agrees with what I have said, then quite obviously the interjection has no bearing on the point I make, namely that the cost in Canada—which is largely made up of labour—is \$1.90 as compared with 64 cents in the case of these imported shoes.

There are obvious reasons why we want to trade with Hong Kong and the other trading centres of Asia, Europe and all other parts of the world. But, Mr. Speaker, it is essential that we face the realities of this situation and recognize that figures of this kind explain some of the problems of unemployment. It is also essential that we decide whether there is to be any attempt to make use of the laws which are actually on the statute books to protect Canadian workmen under a free enterprise system which gives to the people of this country a standard of living that we wish to preserve.

Since the hon. member for Spadina interjected his remark with regard to the comment of the judge, may I remind him that the comment to which he has referred was