

*Proposed Committee on Unemployment*

he listed the types of industry in which unemployment was becoming a problem. For example, he said:

For some, import competition has become keener. This has been particularly true in the case of clothing, textiles and electrical appliances industries. Others, such as sawmilling, farm implements and certain base metal producers have found world markets becoming increasingly competitive. Forestry operations in eastern Canada are currently proceeding at the low levels of last winter, partly because of improved technology in forestry operations, and partly because of softer lumber and pulp markets.

He also said this:

Aside from the difficulties experienced by some industries, there has been a tightening up in many sections of the economy and, as has been the experience of other trading nations, we have gradually moved from a seller's to a buyer's market.

Then the Minister of Labour went on to deal with the action that could be taken by the government and he mentioned first the commencement of a public works program. That idea did not seem to appeal to him greatly because with regard to it he said:

At present, it seems to me that it would be unwise to embark upon a greatly expanded public works program.

He pointed out that the unemployment insurance fund was carrying the load or the burden of unemployment but he also referred to family allowances and old age pensions. Just what they had to do with it I never could quite see, but here is what the minister said:

Many unemployed workers are also being assisted by family allowance payments and by old age pensions. In addition, the provincial and municipal governments are making social welfare payments which benefit those in need.

By that I presume he meant that relief was being paid out to some of those Canadians who were unable to get work. He ended the statement with these words:

There is, however, a residual problem and the most effective way of solving it is through the joint efforts of the provincial and municipal governments and of the federal government.

That was on January 26. On February 9 the Canadian Congress of Labour met in my home city of Vancouver, and I believe similar action was taken in some of the other cities in this country. We find their meeting reported in the press as follows on February 10, under the heading of "Rising Unemployment Creating Concern":

The growing spectre of unemployment is causing increasing concern among Vancouver labour leaders. A suggestion that the Union of Unemployed Workers—grim reminder of depression days—be re-activated was called for Tuesday night by the Greater Vancouver and Lower Mainland Labour Council (CCL).

"There were 100,000 more Canadians unemployed in December than the same month in 1952," said secretary-treasurer Vic Forster.

[Mr. Green.]

"Vancouver now has the second highest unemployment population in the country."

Council recommended holding a joint meeting with the B.C. Trade Union Congress and the B.C. Federation of Labour on the subject.

On the following day, February 10, the Bank of Canada issued their report for the year 1953 and we find the governor of the bank referring to the seriousness of this unemployment problem. At page 4 of the report he has this to say:

Employment during 1953 averaged about 2 per cent above 1952. About one-half of the increase occurred in manufacturing industries and the remainder largely in trade and services. Unemployment for most of the year was slightly lower than in 1952.

Then here are the striking words in his report:

But in the latter part of 1953 employment did not keep pace with the annual increase in the labour force and in December the number of persons without jobs and seeking work was estimated at 190,000 as compared with 132,000 in December 1952.

The governor was obviously referring there to the figures issued by the bureau of statistics and not to the numbers who had applications for work on file with the national employment service. On the same day, February 10, a delegation met members of the cabinet, and we have a press report of what happened at that meeting which is really quite striking. The heading of the article is "Warns labour pricing itself out of jobs". The first paragraph reads:

Labour this morning was firmly lectured by Acting Prime Minister Howe to face the cold economic facts of life.

Apparently the Acting Prime Minister (Mr. Howe) wound up his lecture to these labour representatives with the following statement:

Flatly, he informed them he saw no immediate improvement in the prospects of their industry or their employment and that they had better hunt jobs in other than the farm implement plants.

That seems a rather dictatorial attitude for the Acting Prime Minister of this country to take. However, there you have the lecture which was delivered by the right hon. gentleman less than a week ago. The following day, February 11, a joint submission was made to the cabinet by the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada and the Canadian Congress of Labour. These organizations were represented by four very distinguished Canadians, the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada by Percy R. Bengough, president, and Gordon G. Cushing, general secretary-treasurer, and the Canadian Congress of Labour by A. R. Mosher, president, and Donald MacDonald, secretary-treasurer. These men are all well known from coast to coast for their sane and reasonable approach to public problems. I have known Mr. Bengough for many years. He came here from