

*Proceedings on Adjournment Motion*

mendous increase in the value of the improvements on the flood plain, would probably be \$80 million to \$100 million. We are aware of these things.

The hon. member makes the charge that hindsight instead of foresight has been used. I cannot agree with him entirely in that respect. He will recall the fact that we tabled the final report of the Fraser river board not very long ago. I wrote immediately to the responsible minister in British Columbia, Mr. Williston, suggesting that we should do one thing or the other, that we should use the report which had cost us a lot of money or we should discard it. I wanted to speak to him at once and he came to Ottawa immediately thereafter.

He is already investigating the engineering in respect of an expenditure of about \$5 million to strengthen the dikes, which is the first requirement in the Fraser valley. After that we propose to use the Canada Water Conservation Act to build some dams in the tributaries of the Fraser which, if properly built, should take care of that area for all time. He makes the further suggestion that there should be a permanent organization and I think it has much to commend it. However, that is a suggestion which I think might well be a matter for discussion between the federal government and the provinces the next time we meet.

I think the first suggestion made in that regard was made by Reeve Emmett of Burnaby who, when his municipality was asked for a contribution toward Alberni, suggested that this was improvident and we should have a permanent organization—

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order; I regret that I have to interrupt the minister but his time has expired.

LABOUR CONDITIONS—PROVISION FOR UNEMPLOYED NOT RECEIVING UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE OR SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Lucien Plourde (Quebec West):** Mr. Speaker, my question was directed to the Minister of Labour (Mr. MacEachen). I was asking him what action he intends to take concerning unemployed persons receiving no unemployment benefits or assistance.

If I asked such a question, Mr. Speaker, it is because I get letters every week from many heads of family and hundreds of young men

[Mr. Laing.]

who are out of work and who receive no unemployment benefits or assistance from the province.

I ask the minister what he intends to do for those people without any income, because their families live in the most dreadful poverty.

There is the case of a young man of 22 who was told "Go to such school and you will get a cheque at the end of the month". Imagine his disappointment when at the end of the month he got a cheque for \$10 only, since he had had to dress better and incur transportation and other expenses.

Mr. Speaker, the unemployed are convinced that the government does not care about their condition and that we forget about them. The government must do something for those hundreds of unemployed without income. Wherever they apply, they are told: "No work; full staff".

My riding is mostly made up of workers. Those people are willing to work, but we must find them jobs. That is all they are waiting for to get rid of poverty in their homes.

I agree with what Mr. Firestone said, as reported in today's *Le Droit*:

In a lecture he gave Wednesday at a seminar on the organization of labour held in Manitoba, Mr. O. Firestone, vice-dean of the faculty of social sciences at the University of Ottawa, stated that one Canadian out of five was living in poverty.

A former economic adviser in the Department of Trade and Commerce and a member of the royal commission on health services, Mr. Firestone pointed out that 21 per cent of Canadians are quite poor, but that much greater attention was being paid to the 300,000 unemployed than to the 3.8 million people who are living in a constant state of poverty.

Mr. Firestone added that poverty is one of the four major economic problems which Canada must face...

To overcome poverty would not only serve the poor but "would also contribute to strengthen our economy, increase economic growth and raise the level of employment and everyone's income".

The lecturer recommended also to increase the means which would allow youth to receive a better education and take advantage of technical training. Mr. Firestone believes that social assistance programs ought to be developed.

Moreover, Mr. Firestone advocated an increased assistance to farmers and industry so as to improve the income of employers concerned in those enterprises.

Mr. Speaker, the crucial problem in this country is not the Canadian flag or the national anthem, but rather unemployment. The house should without any delay grapple with this evil.