

*Proposed Committee on Unemployment*

today. This, of course, is very serious because it represents an increase of 93,000 over the same period in the previous year.

As the Acting Prime Minister so clearly pointed out the other night, on its own record this government is entitled to carry on its present policy, which is to wait and see what the world situation is with which we are faced. Is this purely another seasonal upset such as we had in 1950, when in the same period, January, we had 300,000 registered unemployed? By June 1, 1950, the number had been cut down to 139,000 or by something like 66 per cent. I thought the hon. member for Red Deer (Mr. Shaw) was most unfair and inaccurate last night in suggesting that Canada had only been pulled out of the unemployment situation that existed in 1950 because of the Korean war. As you will notice, those figures were for June 1. In other words, the number was down to 139,000 almost a month before the Korean war broke out.

I submit, Mr. Speaker, that on its record; its long record of the most statesmanlike regard for the legitimate rights of labour; its record of having encouraged the legitimate operation and recognition of trade unions, this government is worthy of our confidence and our support. This afternoon the Leader of the Opposition referred to what he heard on the radio this morning, that President Eisenhower had appointed a commission to study unemployment because there were now 3 million registered unemployed in the United States. I would point out to you, Mr. Speaker, that this administration appointed that same kind of commission, not this year but in the year 1944-45. All the basic thinking was done then which will enable us, if the need ever arises, to grapple with a really major world dislocation which would require drastic measures on the part of this particular government.

I think members of this house are well aware—I hope they are, anyway—that for well over 20 or 25 years I have stood for the right of full employment. If a country like Canada can send her sons to fight in a world war, if she can say to her sons that it is their duty to go out and die if necessary in times of war because the interests of the country are at stake, then I believe it is the right of every Canadian to say to that country in a time of peace, "I demand my right to earn my living under our system of society." There is nothing whatever in the record of this government that would allow any member in the house even to imagine that, if the need ever arose for really serious and drastic measures on the part of the government, this would not be the best government we could get to face the situation.

[Mr. Philpott.]

I sometimes think that Canadians have not a good enough opinion of themselves. I often think of the difference between going to a Canadian moving picture theatre and one in the United States. When one visits a United States theatre and sees the picture of the president flashed on the screen, everyone in the theatre applauds. Then I think of those many occasions in my lifetime when I have gone to theatres in Canada, and only once in all that time have I ever seen a Canadian audience applaud when the picture of a Canadian prime minister has been shown.

We do not think highly enough of our leaders. Perhaps we do not have a high enough esteem of our own achievements. And I say to my hon. friends that there is not a single one of those sitting immediately opposite who is not well aware that the record of this Liberal administration is the finest in the entire world in dealing with the problem we are now talking about. We know perfectly well that when the nations met at San Francisco in 1945 to frame that document which came to be known as the charter of the United Nations, the Canadian delegation upon arrival in that city pointed to a great weakness in the charter, showing that it was inadequate on the economic side. All the delegates at that assembly—and I think at that time there was something like 48 national delegations—paid Canada a tremendous tribute by asking the Canadian delegation to write an entire section on economic affairs. Our delegation did this; and any hon. member who will reread the charter will see that one of the sections inserted by the Canadian delegation, representative not only of this government but of members on the other side of the house, placed at the top of the list the subject of full employment.

When we talk about full employment perhaps we are not discussing it in 100 per cent terms as did the hon. member for Fraser Valley (Mr. Patterson), who suggested, and quite rightly, that if there is even one unemployed man in Canada, it is a misfortune for that man. Of course it is. But let us not become confused between what is a personal misfortune and what is of major national concern. In my opinion this government has every right to carry out now exactly the same policy it did in 1950; that is to wait and get the true facts of what we are faced with in the world situation today. If and when the true facts disclose that the situation is serious, one of major capacity, then I for one would want to sit behind no more competent team than that represented by the Acting Prime Minister (Mr. Howe) on the front benches today.