

*Proposed Committee on Unemployment*

I would like to get to the meat of this matter, for the people of Canada are listening very carefully to interpretations placed upon this unemployment situation by labour leaders, the government and by business. They are listening patiently, because it is not an easy matter for them to discern what is truth and what is fiction in much of the double-talk which is going on. It is suggested we should not talk about unemployment because it may create adverse conditions and spoil plans for the future. We would like to know just what these plans for the future are, but more precisely my people are interested in knowing about the plans for the present. Perhaps if we heard of these plans from the government the people might be comforted and accept the belief that the unemployment situation is not serious.

If we were told there are great investments to be made in 1954 I should like to remind those who point to such predictions that prophecy alone will never provide prosperity. If we are to be told of the untold opportunities which exist in Canada I should also like to say that the potential of our land in the economic sense means nothing unless development of that potential takes place.

The government has told us that the present unemployment situation in Canada is an unpleasant seasonal repercussion due to adjustments in our economic life. Let us look at some of the facts as presented by people who are familiar with the situation. I have in my hand a clipping from the *Globe and Mail* dated January 21, 1954. The reading reads "338,066 Seeking Work; Peak Since Wartime." The article reads:

Canadian unemployment is the highest since the war and is still climbing.

Labour leaders, looking at post-war peak figures, predicted the jobless figure will rise to 500,000 by the end of this month.

Two widely varying sets of figures were issued by the government today in its periodic survey of employment. One—from the labour department—showed 338,066 persons looking for work through national employment service at December 10. This compared with the previous post-war high of 312,000 in the late winter of 1950.

Then I have a little clipping here taken from the *Edmonton Journal* dated February 10, which carries the heading "List 12,000 in area seeking work." The report states:

The number of persons looking for work in the Edmonton district exceeded 12,000 last week, officials of the national employment service in Edmonton said Monday.

It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that this is a serious matter. I do not know why the government dismisses it in the manner in

which it has done. I for one have never heard of a fire being put out by ignoring it, or a public enemy No. 1 being arrested through the indifference of those charged with the responsibility of capturing him. I believe the Canadian people at this time are calling on the government to create the freedom and conditions which will enable unemployment to be ended in Canada.

I say this because it seems to me there has been a disgracefully false accent placed on the responsibility for unemployment. We have read of the battle being waged between leaders of industry and labour leaders. Each blames the other for responsibility in this situation. While they are blaming one another, there is a third party, the political expedient, standing on the side and playing one against the other for the sole purpose of acquiring political advantage. I believe that until such time as both labour and business realize their prosperity is indivisible then so long will stoop-shouldered workers be no different from weary and stoop-shouldered businessmen.

At this point I should like to read a statement of great significance which was made by Dave Beck, executive vice-president of the international brotherhood of teamsters, chauffeurs, warehousemen and helpers of America, in an address which he delivered before the Commonwealth Club of California, at San Francisco:

We of American labour believe in our free enterprise system. We do not believe in it simply because it benefits those who have money invested in business upon which they may make profits. Not at all. We believe in free enterprise because we know that it has preserved our liberty and at the same time has given us the highest standard of living and opportunity the world has ever known.

Free enterprise, as opposed to communism and socialism, is in the interests of the vast, overwhelming majority of the people who toil for their living, both here and in other countries. I believe in free enterprise because it inspires initiative within men and women. It provides them with opportunities to rise above their environment and to attain any high place which their ability and intelligence will permit them to achieve. I contend that no system in the history of the world has ever made possible such progress for the working men and women, as free enterprise has accomplished for the American people. I have travelled somewhat around over the world and I do not know of a single solitary country where the working man lives under as fine conditions as he does in this land of free enterprise.

I think that fairly well sums up the case as far as free enterprise goes. Yet certainly nobody in this parliament will condemn or not appreciate or approve the demands which labour is making. I think we would all approve a statement which was recently made by James P. Mitchell, Secretary of