

*Unemployment*

trying to be egotistical at all. I know the word "slum" has been stricken out, that they are called blighted areas today. However, I still think of them in terms of slums. The fact is that the Regent Park project in Toronto has shown leadership that I think could be well followed by many communities, and which could be followed to an even greater extent in Toronto, as I am sure it will be. Such great ramifications are involved that I could not be expected to go into them now, except to say that many people in Toronto who were somewhat dubious about this are today pretty unanimously in favour of this so-called slum clearance. Personally I have been in a few cities in Canada that have never admitted they had slums, but so far as I could see they could readily have admitted it and started clearing out those blighted areas.

Another thing that is coming up today—and this may be one of the answers to the problem, although it is very unpopular with many people who are somewhat capitalist-minded—is the guaranteed annual wage. You know, as soon as you say something about guaranteed annual wages you think, "Oh, what a horrible thing; how could people dream of anything so terrible". But I can remember things that came up 20 years ago that we said were horrible. We commented on how terrible they were, but they are here today. And I would not be surprised if in another 10 or 15 years the guaranteed annual wage would be taken for granted, just the way it is in Sweden. We know that Sweden, while somewhat socialistic, is not considered communistic. It is not considered subversive. It is certainly a free economy. But they have had a guaranteed annual wage since the thirties.

I am not suggesting that this is the time to have the guaranteed annual wage in Canada, nor am I suggesting that we are going to have it. But I do say this. Never scoff at those things which may contribute to the permanence of the economy of Canada. These things do not arise because they are stupid; they arise because somebody believes in them. It may well be that quite a few people today, many of whom are scoffing at the guaranteed annual wage, in 20 years' time will be explaining to their children, "Why, of course, we have it. Did we not always have it?"

No one knows what will happen. People scoff at these things, but in time they come. They come with a definite measure of inevitability, when the economy can bear them. I am not suggesting that the economy can bear the guaranteed annual wage right now, but I am sure hon. members must admit

[Mr. Hunter.]

that, assuming the economy could afford it, there would be a measure of stability which would be desirable.

Unfortunately, however, a third of the gross national product of this country has to be exported to countries the purchasing power of which we do not control. Just as long as we have to export a third of our gross national product to areas over which we have no control, just so long must we sell at whatever prices they can pay. The guaranteed annual wage is probably in the future, but some day we may well have it. You people in the C.C.F. party may have ideas, but you have no common sense.

Another responsibility which the federal government may have to take over—and it has taken it over in the past during a depression—is the matter of relief. As hon. members know, an employable does not get relief. I am not prepared to say that our unemployment problem is gigantic or that it is ridiculously small. It is a problem that is there. But if we are to continue to have this problem, and if the people of Canada are going to continue to expect the federal government to handle it, then the federal government must have the funds with which to provide relief. Because a man is employable surely does not mean that he is not to have some relief, assuming his unemployment insurance has run out and he is in need of relief. We all know that today employable men are deserting their families because, as soon as they desert them, their families become subject to the relief regulations.

It is obvious that if the federal government is to assume responsibility and this is to be their problem—and I am suggesting that the people of Canada expect it to be their problem—then relief must be one of the subjects brought up for consideration at this federal-provincial conference, and the federal government must be allowed the necessary taxation powers. But it is ridiculous at the present time to expect the federal government to do everything before these problems are ironed out.

Another thing I wish to mention is this. I would suggest that today the Bank of Canada has gone about as far as it can go with its discount rate and the various other ways it can help stimulate the economy. Maybe I am getting a little bit out of step at this point, but I would suggest that the situation has now reached the point where the government has a responsibility in that direction. I would suggest that it is perhaps a time for some rather imaginative action.

I have no idea what the Minister of Finance (Mr. Harris) is going to bring down in his