

quite sure that the officials who appear before the committee tomorrow morning will be qualified to answer my friend's question. If the figure were 10 per cent, there might be a million and a quarter people unemployed. The number we now have, as stated by the acting leader of the opposition, is 375,000.

Hon. Mr. Reid: I realize that second reading is not the proper time to ask questions, but the inquiry I have in mind is a very pertinent one. I want to make one remark with regard to a statement of the acting leader of the opposition. Having been a member in the other place of the committee which considered the original Act, let me say that it was never intended, either then or now, that the Unemployment Insurance Act should be a substitute for work. Time and again, here, in the other place, and outside, the opposition have asserted that this legislation is all the government had to offer the unemployed. But the purpose of the Act was not to provide employment. When, in 1940, that Act was before parliament, employment was at its peak and wages were high; and it was intended that a fund should be built up which would serve as a bulwark when it was needed; and that is exactly how it has worked.

Now there are forces at work in this country that for their own ends are making capital of the unemployment situation. While the exceptional weather conditions are not wholly accountable for the number of unemployed, they have affected employment to quite an extent. For example, for a long time there was no snow in certain parts of east central and eastern Canada, and this condition deprived many men of work. Also, British Columbia has had one of the most severe winters in our experience; in fact I have had to suffer two winters, because I had one out west and found another when I came here. The mills in my city were shut down, and thousands were idle. Those who want to take advantage of this condition are saying "The depression has started again"; they are crying "Wolf! Wolf!". But I believe that if the number of unemployed in Canada were counted today there would be a different picture from that of a month ago.

I want to offer one criticism which I believe is legitimate and fair as I say, I was a member of the committee which was associated with the beginning of this legislation and, as one who still holds an active union card, I believe that in the light of present conditions in Canada, apart from the unemployment situation, the government made a mistake in not having consulted labour in connection with the drafting of this bill. I will tell you why I think so. The government represented in this chamber

failed to recognize that two types of labour are operating in Canada. One type belongs to the L.P.P., many of whose members take their orders from Soviet Russia. The other is the legitimate element in labour, which is battling the group that wants to overthrow our democratic system. I feel that the government has not recognized or given encouragement to that section of labour throughout Canada which is in favour of our present democratic system. Labour was called in and consulted in connection with the original Act, and anyone who has looked through it can see that there are many changes which indicate the participation of these sound labour elements.

This sort of insurance is different from ordinary life insurance or fire insurance. For example, if a house is insured, there are reciprocal obligations and benefits, whereas under the provisions of this bill hundreds of people who contribute to the fund will never receive from it one five cent piece. A definite change, never contemplated in the original bill, relates to what is known as "suitable" employment. What is "suitable" employment? Some official has authority to tell a man whether he shall go from here to there, and whether this or that employment is "suitable" employment or not.

Hon. Mr. Horner: The word "suitable" was always in the statute, was it not?

Hon. Mr. Reid: I do not think so. When I read the bill, just this afternoon, the phrase seemed new to me. I may be wrong: the question can be left to the leader of the government and the committee.

My question to the leader of the government is, why should this bill not be sent to the Committee on Immigration and Labour? It is a labour bill.

Hon. Mr. Horner: Before the leader replies, I wish to say one word to the honourable senator from New Westminster (Hon. Mr. Reid). He has spoken of people who by disruptive methods are causing trouble among the unemployed. What happened in Regina when a government of different political views was in power? Notwithstanding that the sole purpose of the organization he mentioned was to seize power in this country, all the government of that day got from the then opposition was the most diabolical campaign of abuse that was ever known in any democracy. Now, it is the snow that causes unemployment; then, it was nothing but the government.

Hon. Mr. Robertson: With reference to the suggestion that labour was not consulted in connection with this bill, I do not wish at this time to dilate upon the extent to which