

The Budget—Mr. Pickersgill

which he reserves for his peregrinations about the country, the minister said something in Brantford which was quoted yesterday; but it is such a gem, sir, that I think I ought to quote it again. I have his text here as issued by the office of the Minister of Finance, press release communiqué division, something which did not exist before the present government came into office, and which I believe is priced at about \$10,000 a year. I believe this is to give the minister a sense of humour. I would say that of all the expenditures of the present government this particular expenditure has been the most thoroughly wasted, sir.

In this speech the minister said:

Parliament was summoned in November to permit early action on the government's program for meeting Canada's economic problems, chiefly that of unemployment.

Then he went on, you know, balancing the one thing against the other, and said:

It is not in any sense an emergency session; there is no national emergency.

Well, sir, there may not be a national emergency in the mind of the Minister of Finance, but in that respect I do not think he finds himself in agreement with the country, and he certainly does not find himself in agreement with those of us who sit on this side of the house.

I am going to do something which I do not think I have done before in the house. I want to set out my views about the nature of this emergency, this unemployment emergency, and I am going to follow my notes fairly closely in doing so because I want to be very precise about what I am now going to say—

An hon. Member: More sensible.

Mr. Pickersgill:—in view of the tendency of hon. gentlemen opposite both to condemn and to pervert what is said on this subject from this side of the house—

Mr. Pallett: Written by the new P. R. man in the office of the Leader of the Opposition, no doubt.

Mr. Pickersgill: Perhaps the hon. gentleman would possess his soul in patience and see—

Mr. Pallett: A professional.

Mr. Pickersgill:

Certain facts have emerged from this debate. They are now crystal clear. First, widespread unemployment is a stark, ugly fact in Canada today . . .

The second fact is that people in this country are suffering when there are evidences of prosperity, when many people are enjoying the largest incomes ever in their experience.

In the face of those facts we still have people in Canada suffering as a result of unemployment. There are people in Canada today who are going hungry as a result of unemployment. There are

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ruptures in family life that are occurring day by day as a result of unemployment. In the great urban centres where unemployment is acute it is the experience of all those connected with welfare, church or philanthropic work in any capacity, or of those who hold positions of public responsibility, that men are deserting their families deliberately because that is the only way in which their families can qualify for relief assistance.

The third fact is that these large numbers who are out of employment today want work . . .

They do not want hand-outs; they do not want cash given to them; they want work . . .

The fourth fact is that Canadian resources are ample. The Canadian future is bright with promise. We have not too many people in Canada. We would make no contribution to the unemployment problem if we had fewer people in Canada today. In the midst of abundance, in the midst of surpluses, in the midst of evidences of prosperity, this ugly fact of unemployment continues.

The fifth fact is that this is a special Canadian problem . . . The situation that confronts Canada is not one that is paralleled in any other comparable country. The situation is quite unlike that of the days of the depression which began in 1929, when the tide of recession, the tide of unemployment, the tide of depression, struck over the entire world. That tide engulfed countries regardless of their resources and regardless of their form of government; it engulfed them all.

Sixth, the government has made no proposals to meet the problem of unemployment . . .

Not one proposal has yet been made by the government in relation to this problem. The government has hitherto made no preparation for a situation of this kind.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Why can you not tell the truth?

Mr. Pickersgill:

But no preparation has been made by this government; it is a tragic fact . . .

There have been ample warnings to bring about a sense of urgency to any government that had a sense of realism and sense of responsibility. It is quite apparent and deplorably manifest now that the government has made no preparation in advance to meet the type of situation which confronts Canada today . . .

I cannot go on, sir. I have three more pages, but every word I have just read—and I have read it, sir; I confess it—was uttered in this house in 1955 by the hon. member for Eglinton; every word.

Mr. Chevrier: Interrupting his own speech.

Mr. Pickersgill: I did not change one single word, sir, because I could not paint such a picture of gloom and doom as the hon. gentleman did on that occasion when, though at that time the unemployment was the highest it had ever been up to then since the end of the war, it was not much more than half as high as it is today, when the same hon. gentleman from the other side of the house says there is no national emergency.

Mr. Fleming (Eglinton): Hear, hear.

Mr. Pickersgill: What is the cure for this national problem? What is the cure offered by this government? An hon. gentleman says "water", and I cannot think of a better