

The Budget—Mr. Racine

C.C.F. members weep and wail, but it seems to me they claim to have a monopoly on ability. This I do not concede; I would rather support the Liberal amendment, an amendment introduced by people who, at least, know about the responsibility of administering the country. The previous Liberal government has already done something positive about the major current problem in this country. After the last war, the government was faced with a similar situation, but there was no unemployment, because under the direction of able administrators, more concerned about the welfare of the people than about politics, solutions were presented in advance of the problems.

The government of the time had to find jobs for an increasing number of Canadians, since the population was growing rapidly and wartime production had come to an end.

That wise and experienced government created thousands of jobs each year and provided work for the ever-increasing number of workers, that is to say for those who were working in war plants, as well as for our soldiers discharged from the armed forces.

That solution was brought about by the creation of new industries, and by giving them the means of necessary expansion in order to provide more jobs for our people, by means of an outstandingly wise external economic policy which allowed us to export our surplus production.

Today, unemployment is our number one problem. Never since the great depression of the thirties has it been so serious. That should not be the case but, since 1957, the matter of full employment has not received the attention it deserved.

This government has proved unable to solve the problem, and its actions are not in keeping with the requirements of that emergency. And yet, unemployment is a reality.

Between October 1959 and October 1960 the number of unemployed in Canada has increased by 117,000. It seems to me these figures are thought-provoking; even if the number of those employed has increased by 92,000, there is still a shortage of 25,000 jobs.

What makes this situation even more complicated is the fact that the unemployment insurance fund has dwindled alarmingly. While unemployment is higher, the unemployment insurance fund is fast dwindling; obviously, those two factors are inter-related, the first one necessarily affecting the second.

It is even said that if things keep going as they are now, by May 31 next, the unemployment insurance fund will go down to an all-time low of \$85 million.

The situation is most serious and requires drastic remedies.

The extent of the evil now prevailing can easily be grasped if we recall, for instance, that on May 31, 1957, the fund amounted to \$878 million.

The present situation is naturally related to the constant increase in the number of unemployed, which will reach unprecedented levels this winter.

This whole unfortunate situation may be explained by a slow down of the national economy. Consequently it is imperative that steps be taken to produce immediate results, since the report submitted by the committee and tabled in the house, on the day of the adjournment, also considers that after March, when the present fiscal year comes to an end, expenses will exceed revenues, on account of the numerous insurance benefits that will be paid in April and May; that is why it is estimated that by May 31, 1961, only \$85 million will remain in the fund.

Faced with the government's inaction, we, on this side of the house, had foreseen the situation which was outlined in the report submitted to the house at the time parliament adjourned for the Christmas holidays, but no more discussion was then possible.

The Minister of Labour (Mr. Starr), has played exactly the same trick on parliament when he tabled a report almost as alarming, from the same committee, on the last day of the session, last August.

Does the government wish to avoid a debate on unemployment in the house and, at the same time, prevent that report from being circulated among the public so that people may not fully realize the seriousness of the situation?

If this were the case, it would show that the government is not shouldering its responsibilities, and is afraid to show the situation as it is, after failing to consider it for the last two years.

The government has no right to play this game, while there are now more than half a million suffering unemployed, in spite of the statement made by the Prime Minister (Mr. Diefenbaker), to the effect that no Canadian would suffer from unemployment as long as he would be Prime Minister.

It is true, however, that in the speech from the throne of this session, which was written by this government, the existence of unemployment, has at last been recognized but it was late in the day, and the government must bear the responsibility for unemployment, as it waited too long before considering it a serious issue. As a matter of fact, the legislation passed in the first part of this