

*Unemployment*

the heading of which reads "Jobless Paid to Quit City and go Home", and which says:

Toronto welfare commissioner Rupert admitted to the civic welfare committee yesterday that his department had given funds to unemployed to leave the city.

Shades of 1935. We do the same thing with vagrants; we arrest them on a charge of some kind and then say, "Well, boys, if you are not here in the morning it will be all right with us, and the best for everybody." But that is not a solution of the unemployment problem. I remember what the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Howe) said when somebody asked him, "What are you going to do with these people when industry closes down?" "Well", he said, "they will have to move somewhere else."

I suppose that is what he would term labour mobility. But I suggest to you, sir, that this government has made no provision for any place in which this mobile force of labour can live. We in this group have constantly advocated the building of at least some proportion of cheap rental housing, but up to the present time the government has not seen fit to agree with us. And so they say, "Just move on. Your luck will change, and the sun will shine."

I have already mentioned that we have increased unemployment benefits, and we are thankful for them. But they are not a substitute for steady work. No wonder, as the hon. member for Parkdale has said, there is a growing demand on the part of labour in this country for a guaranteed annual wage which, incidentally, he did not say he either favoured or disfavoured. He did say that perhaps in time it might come.

The speech from the throne characterized unemployment as seasonal and local. I want to say a word or two now about the prairie west, where I live. As hon. members know, the prairie west is not heavily industrialized as is the east. That has been one of our major problems. Let me admit at once that part of the industry in my own province of Saskatchewan is seasonal, with respect to workers who have been laid off after being engaged in construction work. But let me point out, too, that this generally speaking has been one of the best winters we have had in Saskatchewan for a long time, and that actually the number laid off from construction work has not been so very large.

Lack of work in construction does not account for all the unemployment there, nor does it explain its increase. As a matter of fact in my own city we have overcome that problem to some degree. There are two large buildings going up in the city

today, one of which is the Imperial Bank of Canada building and the other a building of the government-owned telephone system, if I may mention such a thing in this august chamber. I have pictures of those buildings here, as they appear in the local paper, and I see they are all walled in with lumber and canvas, and that construction goes on as usual inside that protection.

So the unemployment is not just in the construction industry. And, by the way, I have figures here showing the numbers of construction workers who have been laid off, and those numbers are remarkably small. Here are some of the figures for Saskatchewan. On February 13 the number listed as applying for work was 21,290. Then somewhat older figures, those of last January, show that at that date in the city of Regina 5,025 were on the list in 1955 as compared with 3,297 for the same date in 1954. That is a large increase. The figures for Saskatoon show that on January 1 there were 4,388, and the corresponding figure for 1954 is 3,532. However, it will be noted that on February 13, about six weeks later, the number listed in Saskatoon had risen to 4,830, and only 664 of those unemployed applicants for work were labelled as construction workers, or would come in the construction category.

The situation in my own city was sufficiently serious that the executives of the two great labour unions, the Canadian Congress of Labour and the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada, have been meeting to see if they could not offer some solution.

In addition to the lay-offs in construction work there are of course lay-offs of Canadian National Railways workers. After all, when one reads the story as it appears on the balance sheet of that company, to which I referred a moment ago, one can understand why C.N.R. workers have been laid off.

Then there is another local industry—and our industries are few, of course. In this instance, however, I am referring to the meat packing industry. Intercontinental Packers in their report show lay-offs of about 30 per cent of their total force. The owner of that company is reported as saying that he hoped a complete shut-down of the plant would not be necessary, but he estimated that lay-offs might go as high as 50 per cent unless things improved quickly. As a matter of fact there were only 400 workers on the staff of that company this year, although the usual average is 700. So it must be pointed out that the percentage laid off must be taken in respect of the smaller number, the 400 people, which is not much more than half the usual staff of