

*The Address—Mr. Ellis*

support of the members of this house, then the government has a moral and legal obligation to continue to give service.

What are some of these questions that have gone unanswered as yet by the government of the day? A moment ago I mentioned unemployment insurance. In view of the growing severity of the unemployment situation, amendments to this act are long overdue. We know that on April 25, speaking in Toronto, the Prime Minister promised to amend the Unemployment Insurance Act to increase benefits, to eliminate the waiting time and to extend the benefits to a full 52 weeks. When, Mr. Speaker, may we expect some action to fulfil that pledge? Surely, no hon. member in this house can suggest that the situation is not urgent or that this is something that should be put off until another session of this parliament. This is something that is crying out for attention.

I realize that the Prime Minister has admonished those who use the word "unemployment", suggesting that such thinking has caused a depression. I recall many years ago, as a youngster, reading an account of an economist who was trying to explain the reason for the last depression. The only intelligible answer which he could give was that everyone lost confidence, so we had a depression. Now the suggestion is going abroad that anyone who draws the attention of the government to the serious unemployment problem in Canada is destroying confidence and, in some obscure way, is aggravating the problem that is growing day by day.

We in the C.C.F. believe that full employment ought to be of prime concern to the present government. There is no excuse for unemployment in this country. I agree that there is a fractional unemployment of a seasonal nature which occurs in certain districts as a result of a switch-over in jobs. We are never going to have a time when everybody in the labour market is placed. But I suggest that any time the number of these applicants for employment exceeds 2 per cent of our labour force we are faced with unemployment.

What is the government doing about unemployment? The answer given by the Minister of Labour (Mr. Starr) is exactly the same as the answer which could have been given by the minister of labour last year, the year before or ten years ago. I cannot see any difference in policy between the present government and the Liberal government with respect to unemployment. Certainly directives are issued to employment offices; they set up their advertising to

try to get a little work done, but that is not the answer to the problem.

**Mr. Starr:** What is the answer?

**Mr. Ellis:** We will be happy to discuss it at the appropriate time.

**Mr. Starr:** You tell me what the answer is.

**Mr. Ellis:** The minister will have a full indication at the appropriate time when his estimates are before the house.

**Mr. Starr:** You tell us.

**Mr. Argue:** Sell some wheat.

**Mr. Ellis:** The Prime Minister has said over the radio and television that the unemployment situation is not serious. I suggest that for a single Canadian worker to be out of work is a personal tragedy. When you multiply that by hundreds of thousands of workers in this country, then you realize the full extent of the tragedy. In the meantime, we have yet to see any indication that the present government has any effective plan to deal with the unemployment situation.

**Mr. Bell (Carleton):** What is the hon. gentleman's plan?

**Mr. Starr:** Give us a suggestion, and we will carry it out.

**Mr. Ellis:** If hon. members will vote for our amendment they will find it covers the point very well. We in the C.C.F. believe the only way you can maintain full employment is by adopting those measures of social and economic planning which are necessary to maintain it.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Ellis:** I am suggesting that there is no difference between the Conservative party and the Liberal party in this respect. There was no difference between the policy of Mr. Bennett of putting the unemployed in relief camps and the policy of Mr. King of giving them 50 cents a day. So far neither the Liberals nor the Conservatives have come up with any solution to the unemployment problem.

**An hon. Member:** Neither can you.

**Mr. Ellis:** The Conservatives suggest they have the answer. I suggest the Minister of Labour and the Prime Minister take the house into their confidence and tell us what the government proposes to do in so far as unemployment is concerned, instead of drifting and just keeping their fingers crossed, hoping for the best. The government appears to be following that policy.

There are several matters, Mr. Speaker, that are of considerable importance to the