

46,000 wage earners were drawn into employment, together with another figure which I am sorry to put on the record. He would have found that while 169,000 unemployed employables were receiving aid twenty-three months ago, to-day 171,000 are receiving aid. In other words, in our war effort and our expansion of the physical volume of business in the last two years we have not taken any people from the category of unemployed employables and put them in the class of wage earners. That is a serious situation, which should engage the attention of the government. We have a mobilization bill now. Some do not like the word "conscription" but the unemployed would like to be conscripted off the relief rolls if we could find work for them. Let our administration give leadership in that regard and let us all do everything possible to see that relief costs are less, that wage earners are put into production and that our physical volume of business expands. This might help us to expand our national income to the \$4,500,000,000 the minister mentioned, which, at our present speed, we are not going to achieve.

On June 21 I wrote the deputy minister of finance and asked for a review of government accounts, 1939-40, and a review of economic and financial conditions for the same period. This always forms part of the budget address. I should like to make a constructive suggestion with regard to the conduct of budget debates. Of course as ordinary members we could go down to the bureau of statistics and gather this information, which was all available for perhaps a month before it was given to the minister. But to my amazement the reply I received from the deputy minister of finance was that this material was not given to me but would be tabled by the minister at the time he delivered his budget speech and would be printed as an appendix to the House of Commons debates. We could have taken a staff and done this work for ourselves, but in my opinion in future budget debates we should have this information a week or two in advance of the budget speech. I make this statement to the Minister of Finance: Had I been asked a week ago to make the speech I am making to-day, and had I had this information I should have been prepared to follow on immediately after the minister, and to permit some of my colleagues to deal with specific items which must receive our attention at this time, and save two days' time.

Mr. RALSTON: As my hon. friend must realize, I have been in the position in which he finds himself to-day. I believe the custom has been to do as has been done in the present instance, namely to present the accounts along with the budget speech. The

[Mr. J. H. Harris.]

general reason they cannot be presented to the house earlier is that the budget is generally delivered much nearer March 31. However I thoroughly agree with my hon. friend's observations with regard to the present year. I really believe that what has happened is that the compilation did not take place until very recently. I can say to him truthfully that this copy was not put on my desk until the Thursday preceding last Monday.

As the hon. member must know, we have been working at very high pressure. I can say to him that I am sure the government would gladly accept his suggestion if sufficient time elapses between the end of the fiscal year and the presentation of the budget speech.

Mr. HARRIS (Danforth): I am glad to accept the minister's explanation. I suggest however it does not excuse him on the point I had made, namely that the minister might have been fairer had he gone back two years, particularly in respect of his observations regarding the number of wage earners put back to work.

All these observations, Mr. Speaker, lead to a consideration of the ways and means for expanding the national income of Canada. How can we secure that extra \$700,000,000 of national income which we must have if we are to be in a position to meet our obligations? I have one minor suggestion in that regard, and it is this: We have been told about the formation of a new department of government to be known as the Department of National War Services. I hope when that department gets under way—and we trust it may do so quickly—it will take full advantage of the desire of all our people to be doing something productive, even if it be only tending a vegetable garden after business hours, or working in spare time to produce war supplies; that it will get all our people into some kind of activity so that they may take comfort in the thought that they are doing something on behalf of the war effort. If this is done our production will be increased to the extent of many thousands of dollars, and that increased production will add considerably to our national income.

Spend a billion! The Minister of Finance says he is going to spend \$700,000,000, and then he timidly suggests that perhaps there will be another \$180,000,000 or \$200,000,000. I say to him: tell the people frankly that you are going to spend a billion dollars. Let them of their own initiative and enterprise, and through their investment in industry, get in on that job of work. If the minister does that, he will tend to inspire confidence and to increase Canada's national income by expanding her physical volume of business.