

Unemployment

would help to combat communism by raising their standards of living; and three, and no less important, it would give very important and valuable work to Canadians.

The eighth point of the labour council is this:

By special measures to help depressed industries and depressed areas by bringing industries to such areas or by helping workers to move to places where work is available.

There are hundreds of thousands of unemployed in this country today who want work. They are not work-shy, but they do not have the financial resources to permit them to transfer to another city, and of course they have no knowledge that when they get to another city they are going to find work. The government has to take some initiative in this matter of helping those who want to go to other places to find work by subsidizing them financially.

The government has to do more than that. It is more than a matter of factories here and factories there. What this country wants to know is what is the policy of the government. We do not know, because we have not been told; and surely the very least the Prime Minister owes to this house, and to Canada, is, before this debate is over, to rise in his place and make that statement of policy for which all Canadians are waiting.

Mr. Harold E. Winch (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, I desire to speak in support of the subamendment to the amendment respecting unemployment which is now before us. It is quite obvious that I am surprised at having to immediately follow a speaker from this group. It would appear, sir, that on this most important issue of unemployment the Conservatives and the Social Crediters have folded up. I cannot say the same thing for the Liberals. They have not folded up, because they could not; they have never opened up.

Even though there is now, according to their own last figures, a total of something in the neighbourhood of 614,000 Canadian citizens in search of employment—a figure, may I say, only just 225,000 below the peak of unemployment in the hungry 1930's—I have been surprised that, although this subamendment has been moved, not a minister on the government side of the house has seen fit to speak.

I want to say at the outset that I very definitely have been amazed at the fact that although this debate has been going on now for approximately four weeks, and although the numbers on the unemployment roll have been increasing, according to government figures, the Prime Minister, as the head of

[Mr. Stewart (Winnipeg North).]

the government of Canada, has not seen fit to speak. We know the Prime Minister is very busy, but he has been here quite often. He has never moved from his seat to take part in this debate on the biggest problem that is facing the people of the Dominion of Canada. I can only say, sir, that he has the same aptitude as those who are taking part in the rocking-chair marathons which are now the rage in some parts of Canada. He sits glued to his seat.

This is a mighty important issue. It is not one that can be answered by complacency on the part of the government, or complacency on the part of those who support the government. I can come to only one conclusion—I do not like to come to it—and that is that those who support and inform the government either have never been unemployed and hungry or they have forgotten what it is to be unemployed and hungry. I am rather afraid that perhaps the complacency of being a \$10,000 or \$27,000 a year man has so settled their stomachs that their brains are atrophied. They are refusing completely to face up to the facts and the situation that is facing hundreds of thousands of our people here in our Dominion of Canada.

I know it has been said and even boasted by government supporters that there is going to be a dominion-provincial conference held around April 26. According to the Prime Minister he would be surprised if the question of unemployment was not raised. Well, Mr. Speaker, a preliminary discussion on April 26 to lay plans for a dominion-provincial conference some time in the fall cannot be a great deal of satisfaction to those who are in need of food, of shelter, of clothing and of jobs at the present time.

With all due deference to the first citizen of Canada, who is our Prime Minister, it is not a sign of good government, it is not a sign of leadership in our dominion for him, while he can be in the house, to remain in his seat stroking his moustache and saying nothing about the problem or what the government is going to do about it.

Mr. Speaker, I have been unemployed, and I have gone hungry. I notice that of the 614,000 unemployed in Canada, according to the government's figures, 62,000 live in the province of British Columbia and 31,000 of those live in my own city of Vancouver where I, too, in 1931 and 1932, was unemployed, where I had to go on relief and walk over two miles each two weeks to get supplies and then take them home in a gunnysack.

And then, sir, I knew heads of families by the dozen who went hungry day after day