

*Employment Commission*

imposed on the municipalities in a very careless and thoughtless way. The municipalities have accepted the burden; the provinces have accepted the burden; the railways have accepted the burden. But as the years have passed the burden has become heavier and heavier, and now, owing to that reckless policy, the provinces are bankrupt. Many municipalities are bankrupt and the great metropolis of Canada is in dire distress. And there is something else that was ignored in that special session of 1930 when those fresh from victory were claiming for themselves power and rights over the citizens of this country. They forgot that if the federal government has new sources of taxation, if the provinces have new sources of taxation on gasoline, liquor and so on, the municipalities have no more revenue from taxation. It is mostly the owner of immovable property who must pay his share of the responsibilities incurred by the municipality. All that has been said until now is clear to everyone, it cannot be denied by anyone; and to-day the owners of immovable property cannot get a cent from their tenants, or when they get something they get it out of taxes they pay for the support of the unemployed.

We hear about building new houses, about having housing schemes for tenants who will not be able to pay a cent in rent. Another thing that was forgotten by the late government in the special session of 1930 and in the session of 1931, a thing they did not realize during the five years they were in power—

Some hon. MEMBERS: Oh, oh.

Mr. POULIOT: If my hon. friends make jokes about it I will name them in the house, in order that their names shall be kept on record to show in what spirit they take the truth. I know that the truth is very offensive to them, but they must listen to the end.

During those five long years it was impossible to obtain a decent answer from the then prime minister or his colleagues, including the ex-minister of labour. Also the prime minister was at one and the same time minister of finance and minister of labour, representing in that government both capital and labour. The first fundamental of a sound, red-blooded Canadian policy was entirely forgotten by that government. To-day we have to think about a policy. I wonder what kind of cooperation will be asked by the dominion government from the provinces and the municipalities. The municipalities have no means to pay, because the owner of immovable property cannot meet his taxes, he cannot get a cent from the unemployed who dwell in his houses, and he cannot be

[Mr. Pouliot.]

taxed any more. In my humble opinion the first thing that should be done for the relief of unemployment is to get back to common sense as it prevailed from 1867 to the black year 1930 when the other government came into power.

I am reluctant to do anything that is not acceptable to the majority of the party to which I am proud to belong and on whose behalf I have spoken in several provinces besides my own. But, sir, if the Prime Minister is inviting suggestions from hon. members from Alberta who do not belong to this party, he must rejoice and be proud to receive suggestions from any private member who belongs to the Liberal party, who has done so all his life, and who will remain so even if he has to fight Tory policies under a Liberal disguise. I do not wish to offend any one on either side of the house, but mark you, at times when a general surrenders he is court martialed, and the court martial takes into consideration any error of judgment that he has committed. A general is not permitted to make mistakes of judgment; he is the less responsible if he takes the advice of those colleagues who are supposed to sit with him in council. At times, unfortunately for this country, that practice has not been followed. The advice came from outside, and it is to those who gave that wrong, pernicious and dreadful advice that I am so strongly opposed. They, it is true, are mere individuals, flies on the window, but with a very fat bank roll. But this is immaterial; individuals do not count, but if a man speaks as one on behalf of ten millions he must do his very best for all the others.

I would warn the government against continuing any tripartite policy of unemployment relief. It is my duty to do so, and I am not afraid to do it. I do not desire to put blame on the shoulders of anyone who is not responsible for the calamities that have fallen on this country for so many years. My suggestion is a very simple one. If we want to have a strong, vigorous and efficient unemployment relief policy, first of all let every one be master in his own house. Secondly, for that purpose let us adjust the British North America Act in order that the spirit which prevailed with such fortunate consequences during so many years shall be restored. The most important committee of this house is the committee on the British North America Act. Their purpose should be to change it not for the sake of change but in order to make it workable in 1936 as it was in 1867, in 1896, in 1911 and until 1930. Perhaps there are sufficient reasons why the committee has not met until now. Per-