

Proposed Committee on Unemployment

industrial relations should immediately examine into and report upon the actual unemployment situation throughout Canada and present recommendations to this house as to short term and long term methods for dealing effectively with this problem.

Mr. Green: That is perfectly satisfactory.

Mr. Speaker: I appreciate the co-operation of the hon. member. Therefore we will consider that the amendment as moved by the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra and seconded by the hon. member for Prince Albert is corrected in the way I have indicated.

An amendment has been moved by the hon. member for Cape Breton South (Mr. Gillis), seconded by the hon. member for York South (Mr. Noseworthy), as follows:

That all the words of the amendment after the words "this house is of the opinion that" to the end of the amendment be deleted and that the following words be substituted therefor:

"the serious and mounting unemployment situation now facing this country calls for immediate action by the federal government to prevent further economic distress."

The only reference I should like to read now in connection with the amendment to the amendment is citation 371 of Beauchesne's third edition. I am not making a ruling; I simply want to submit this at the moment. The citation reads:

A subamendment which proposed an alternative to the original amendment is in order provided it is relevant to the question.

Mr. Ambrose Holowach (Edmonton East): Mr. Speaker, I intend to keep my remarks brief and as much to the point as possible in dealing with the unpleasant situation which has been created by "seasonal and sectional" unemployment. I think all of us are very interested in trying to solve the problem posed by the unhealthy employment situation existing in Canada and other parts of the world, resulting from various reasons.

First, it seems to me that our first responsibility as members of parliament should be to all the Canadian people who have sent us here for the purpose of charting the course of our national life, not only to secure our nation from outside forces but to eliminate also economic injustices which endanger the well-being of our nation. I believe every member of parliament should remember that although the Canadian people have grave responsibilities which in the past they have discharged magnificently, they also have definite privileges not the least of which is the right and heritage of every Canadian to find conditions within our country which will enable him or her, if willing and able, to work and find reward for their labour or

[Mr. Speaker.]

investment in order to provide for their families and share in the abundance of this God-given land.

The unemployment situation, as far as I am concerned, is perhaps not in the full sense of the word a serious crisis; but it is closely related to the unemployment situation in the United States, as well as in the other nations of the free world. To my mind the unemployment picture in Canada is a danger signal, related very closely to the unemployment picture in every country of the western world, and it is the consequence of a slowly developing but far-reaching policy on the part of those who are determined to wreck our way of life. Let us not make any mistake about that.

The exact number of unemployed in Canada is not, I think, important in this debate; nor would it be possible, I believe, to determine the exact figures. The figures released by the government a few moments ago do not tell the whole story, because the unemployment insurance commission as well as the census bureau can give us only a partial picture. There are many jobless workers who are not covered by unemployment insurance, and many who have exhausted their unemployment benefits. The real figures, in any event, are far greater than those given to us by the government spokesman; and I think, for practical reasons, in viewing this unemployment picture in Canada we should consider the hundreds of thousands of people who are dependent upon the unemployed in this country.

The unemployment situation in Canada is very serious. Every single hon. member in this house, I am sure, will admit that unemployment is already a serious problem in his own constituency. I know it is a serious problem in the constituency of Edmonton East, which I represent. We know the agricultural industry is in distress, although the government has often stimulated the entire industry artificially. The coal industry has been in distress for many years. There has been repeated mention in the press and over the radio of large lay-offs in the textile industry, the shipping industry, and in the railway industry. I believe if an examination is made of the number of business failures it will reveal quite clearly that the unemployment situation demands the immediate attention of the government. Whatever the exact unemployment figure may be, I believe, if we view it in the light of the limited population in Canada and the total labour force we will see that it represents a very serious percentage.