

That is to say, if in 1920 there were twelve different establishments which in the meantime had become amalgamated, and if the total number of employees employed by those twelve establishments was 1,200, that now they will show as 1,200 employed, whereas perhaps so far as the establishment into which the balance has been merged may only have had in its employ 100. That is not a correct statement of the situation; it gives an entirely false impression. The fact of the matter is that in 1920, (the date is just a little wrong, it is a mere technical error) and should be ignored; it should be the 17th of January, 1920, and not the 1st of January, 1920) in January 1920 statistics were collected by the Department of Labour, then responsible for the collection of this data, from firms in eastern Canada employing five or more persons, and in western Canada those employing ten or more. Now, these firms which in the meantime may have amalgamated would be reporting in 1920, if they were in existence at that time, and their base value is all included in the base figure which is used to-day; so that if the 12 establishments in 1920 employed 1,200 people, and if an amalgamation has taken place by which those 1,200 people have now all been brought under one establishment, it is not a picture showing one establishment as having increased the number of employees from one to twelve hundred; the comparison would still show by the use of the base figure that in 1920 there were 1,200 persons employed in the establishments represented at that time.

It goes on to say further:

While these statistics are inadequate to present a clear picture of the actual state of employment or unemployment in Canada, and inadequate as a basis for making any definite numerical forecast of unemployment, they are nevertheless useful for comparative purposes. One year may be compared with another, but this type of comparison is limited because changes in the method of the collection of statistics have made long-time comparisons impossible.

That criticism does not apply to any statistics published by the Department of Labour with regard to employment or unemployment since the year 1920 with the exception which has already been noted; no material change has taken place, and I submit that when the Bureau of Statistics raises the minimum of employees from five or ten, as the case, may be, to fifteen, of firms from which they collect their statistics, the total result, the picture, is not materially affected.

Mr. Woodsworth almost made some inquiry, and several other members of the Committee I think were interested in the matter, or showed themselves interested by asking questions, as to the value of the Employment Office Statistics, and questions arose as to whether the returns received from the offices of the Employment Service of Canada could be regarded as in any measure for calculating the tendency of employment throughout Canada. I stated at that time that so far as the percentage of persons registering at the offices of the Employment Service during periods of depression as compared with periods of prosperity was concerned, a smaller percentage of the total number of unemployed was registered in our offices than in periods of prosperity when opportunities for securing work were greater. I do not wish to change that testimony in the slightest degree; it still holds good but I have made a comparison between the significance of certain of our figures derivable from our office reports with those of the returns received from employers and collected by the Bureau of Statistics, showing how the volume of employment varied, and I have what I consider to be a rather remarkable comparison to submit to you.

Taking the index number of the volume of employment afforded by the various industries in Canada as collected by the Bureau of Statistics, I find the smallest number of employees were employed in the year 1922, covering the

[Mr. R. A. Rigg.]