

Supply—Labour

of 1958—that they would amend the Unemployment Insurance Act. The only amendment they made was to increase the contribution in a desperate effort to overcome the bleeding of the fund.

This government has pretended ever since they got into office that the amount of unemployment has been grossly exaggerated by other people, notably by the opposition, and that it was not really serious. Indeed they pretended that it was not any more serious than it was when the previous government was in office. But the best evidence of the blindness of the government and their utter refusal to face facts or reality is the fund itself, this fund which from 1942 to 1957 built up to the point where it contained at its peak, as my friend the hon. member for Welland pointed out, nearly \$1 billion; I think \$928 million was the figure to the nearest million.

All that except \$100 million has been dissipated, and indeed the government is afraid it will all be dissipated and that the fund may require a loan. Therefore it is asking parliament to authorize this loan.

Now, at the very time this is happening in the house, what kind of picture is given to the country by the leader of the government? Surely one would have expected the Prime Minister speaking on "The Nation's Business" to face up to the problem and to put the facts before the people, to put the grimness and seriousness of the situation with respect to the fund before the population. But not a word was said of that nature in the broadcast the Prime Minister gave on Wednesday night at the very time this matter was before the house, when the minister's estimates were brought before us.

Listen to what the Prime Minister had to say about unemployment. He said:

And I come to the employment situation. It's been better every month during the last six or seven months—

Not a suggestion that the period before the past six or seven months were the worst months since the thirties. Not a hint of that. Just:

—It's been better every month during the last six or seven months.

As a matter of fact one cannot help but suspect that the Prime Minister had the assistance of the incomparable Minister of Public Works in the preparation of this extraordinary document.

An hon. Member: It is true.

Mr. Pickersgill: No doubt it is true. I would suggest that they are eminently suited to one another.

Mr. Walker: I thank the hon. member.

Mr. Pickersgill: And it serves them both right. The Prime Minister said, and I repeat:

It's been better every month during the last six or seven months compared with the corresponding month in the previous year.

Mr. Walker: Is that not correct?

Mr. Pickersgill: I say, sir, that was the worst period since the thirties.

Mr. Cardiff: Doom and gloom.

Mr. Pickersgill: What more doom and gloom could you have than the minister's statement that he had exhausted \$928 million and was having to ask the treasury to lend money to this fund after only four years of administration by this government. The real gloom and doom came with this government and it will not go as long as we have this government.

Mr. Walker: Turn off that record.

Mr. Pickersgill: No one can manage the affairs of the country when we have not a government; and we have had no government and no administration in Canada—just a collection of buck passers—ever since June 21, 1957. They have never faced a single problem.

Mr. Cardiff: Find a new approach. You have worn that one out.

Mr. Pickersgill: The people of Canada are going to have a new government just as soon as they are given a chance and the hon. gentleman who interrupts will be home in Huron county after that.

Mr. Cardiff: How much do you bet? How much money have you got?

Mr. Pickersgill: I should think after the earlier experience this afternoon hon. gentlemen would allow me to deal with the subject that is before us—

Mr. Walker: The seventy fifth playing of the same record.

Mr. Pickersgill: —without any assistance from that distinguished privy councillor the Minister of Public Works—

Mr. Walker: Hear, hear.

Mr. Pickersgill: —who has done so much to elevate the tone of public life in this country—

Mr. Walker: Thank you.

Mr. Pickersgill: —since he was elected to this parliament and who has the modesty to applaud himself.

Mr. Brassard (Lapointe): He does not recognize sarcasm.