

and insist that so long as we have unemployment, at least a minimum of decent and reasonable living conditions shall be provided.

The number of persons unemployed does not matter so very much. Remember that one person who is out of work suffers just as much as if there were a hundred unemployed, and a hundred unemployed experience as much suffering as if the problem involved several hundred thousands. The fact that there is a war on, or that we believe there may be work available, is no reason why we should allow people to be thrown off the relief rolls until we are satisfied that every one of them, by the exercise of ordinary effort, can get work.

Hon. NORMAN A. McLARTY (Minister of Labour): Mr. Chairman, if I correctly interpret the remarks of the hon. member for Vancouver East, they are to the effect that so long as some are unemployed, we should not unduly increase hours of labour so as to give extra work to those who are employed, thus prejudicing the position of those who are not employed. I believe he also stressed the importance of having employment offices to see to it that the conditions which he suggests, and correctly, have heretofore existed, shall not continue.

In the first place, the hon. member is well aware, and none better, that incidental to the Unemployment Insurance Act, of which he was of such great assistance in securing the passing, it will be necessary for the Department of Labour of Canada to take over the employment agencies. I trust and believe that the execution of that undertaking will provide a complete answer to the question he raises about employment offices.

As regards the problem of hours of labour, I agree with him that while men are unemployed it is inadvisable to increase to an unreasonable extent the hours of labour of those who are in employment. Circumstances and occasions may render necessary some increase of hours, but until every man in Canada is employed it is a sound and definite policy not to lengthen hours of labour provided we can arrange increased shifts.

I believe I have covered in a general way the suggestions made by the hon. member. If there are others, I shall be glad to deal with them.

Mr. MacINNIS: I should like to see the government adopt a new attitude towards the unemployed and to deal with them, not on the principle that they are a nuisance, but because we hate misery and want to relieve it. Let the government deal with unemployment in a humane way, as if the unemployed were members of the family and we were

[Mr. MacInnis.]

determined not to see members of the family in need. Take them into the family circle, because they cannot be in the family as long as they are outcasts and unemployed. That is what I should like to see the federal and provincial governments do.

Mr. McLARTY: Nothing could give one more satisfaction than to see this tragedy of unemployment, if we may so describe it, ended. Fortunately the figures indicate a definite reduction. I assure the hon. gentleman that any failure to take steps to end unemployment is due not to any complacent and smug attitude on the part of this government but to the fact that we are dealing with an exceedingly difficult problem.

Fortunately or unfortunately, it has been solved to some extent under existing conditions. I say unfortunately, because the conditions are undoubtedly unfortunate, and fortunately, because the facts are demonstrating to us each day that those conditions are nevertheless improving. If there are any proposals which the hon. gentleman can make that would assist us in the matter, I should be glad to hear them.

Mr. CHURCH: Will the minister try to broaden out the agreements in connection with the settlement of the relief problem with the provinces in order to bring about some joint action by the dominion and the provincial governments with regard to moratorium, rents, usury and all such matters notwithstanding the laws, statutes, usages or customs of the country? Nothing weighs more heavily on the working people than these matters to which I have referred. The government may have to broaden out the War Measures Act, but they will not need additional legislation. It is all very well to say that the price control board has jurisdiction, but we know that nothing can be done under that board. There is jurisdiction in England; there the government can take action in any direction for the welfare and good of the country. I am simply asking the minister to consider this problem jointly with the provinces during the recess of parliament in order to see if something really satisfactory cannot be evolved, because nothing reacts more detrimentally upon the people than the evils to which I have referred. The action of the loan companies in the district from which I come is simply scandalous, and I urge the government to take steps to bring about some joint action with the provinces in this regard during the recess of parliament.

Mr. McLARTY: I am sure the hon. member appreciates the fact that the constitutional question and the difficulties involved will