

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Argue: Listen to the democrats howling.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps I should say again that when I rose on the first occasion it was to inform the hon. member that his time had expired at 9.04. It was then past 9.06. He had already enjoyed two minutes over his 40-minute limit, and that was unanimously agreed to because no one rose on a point of order.

Mr. Winch: I appreciate your indulgence.

Mr. Speaker: When the Speaker is on his feet hon. members should not rise even to address the Chair. The hon. member asked for permission to carry on. I asked hon. members if they would give their consent and the answer was no. I should like to point out that when that answer is given the hon. member is not entitled to rise and try to finish a sentence anyway. Let us have agreement on this.

Now the hon. member for Red Deer may proceed.

Mr. F. D. Shaw (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, for the past two days the unemployment problem in Canada has occupied the attention of members of the house. That fact would indicate that at least a good many hon. members look upon the problem as one which has taken on very serious proportions. It occurs to me, therefore, that a duty rests upon the shoulders of each and every member of the house.

I have been somewhat amazed at certain attitudes that have been expressed with respect to this current problem. I have to ask the government a question. Just how serious must a problem of this character become before the government will characterize it as a serious problem? True, the Minister of Labour did indicate that in so far as we have one unemployed person the problem is serious as far as that individual is concerned. I agree. But looking at the matter from a national point of view I ask just how serious must the problem become before the government will consider it as one of serious proportions?

Obviously when there are from 300,000 to 500,000 unemployed in Canada it does place before parliament a problem which parliament should undertake to solve. The Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Martin) tells the Canadian people day after day in literature issued by his department that they should watch for first symptoms and take action. Doctors tell you that, dentists tell you that, eye specialists tell you that. I would

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say that the Liberal party should do the same thing with respect to a problem of this character involving our economic ills.

I well recall, sir, that it was February of 1950 when we last debated this problem as we have been debating it for the past few days. At that time I quoted statements from the late prime minister, Right Hon. Mackenzie King, speaking in this house in the spring of 1935, at which time Canada had only 400,000 registered unemployed. The language used by the late prime minister in describing that situation was almost out of this world. I quoted it in February of 1950, but I shall not quote it again tonight. I agreed at that time with what had been said. I stated that those arguments applied with equal force in February, 1950; and I underline my conviction that they apply with even greater force today.

During this debate we have heard spokesmen for the government categorize at least part of this unemployment as being seasonal. I was rather interested in the observation of the hon. member for Oxford (Mr. Nesbitt) when he said "seasonal, yes, but apparently more seasonal than usual." Some of the unemployment has been characterized as frictional. I would have to say in this case, yes, but undoubtedly more frictional than usual. The Acting Prime Minister referred to another apparent cause for this vast army of unemployed. He referred to a slowdown in the pace of business. In my opinion that is where we should be casting our eyes at this time.

It is true that certain seasonal unemployment is normal and to be expected. It is true also that a certain amount of what we call frictional unemployment is normal and to be expected, that is at certain times of the year. But when the minister referred to an apparent slowdown in the pace of business, then I began to do some thinking. Is that slowdown in the pace of business temporary? Is it seasonal? I should like to have answers to those questions. Is it taking on certain permanent aspects which may be extremely dangerous? I have read numerous reports of late which referred to statements of men who operate or manage secondary industries in Canada. Some of their assertions have not been too encouraging. To what extent have their inventories been built up as a consequence, in part, of the Canadian people being unable to buy, thanks to heavy taxation and thanks to the heavy cost of just normal living?

I should like to see a survey of business inventories across this country. It was only two or three days ago that I was told of a certain individual who was discharged from his employment after having been with a firm