

Supply—Labour

my riding, particularly in the town of Pembroke, we have had for the past two years a most unhappy and distressing unemployment situation. When I go home on Saturdays my office is filled with people who have come to see me to beg me to get them a job, which of course is utterly impossible at the present time. I think with the weather we experience in the Ottawa valley this winter campaign of repairing streets is similar to building battle-ships in Barrie.

Pembroke town council sent a committee to Toronto last year and I explained to the committee the results of their visit. We have found in my constituency that it is cheaper to wait till the warmer weather comes along, and without the assistance of either the provincial or the dominion governments we find this work can be done cheaper. So naturally we wait till the warmer weather comes along. Last year the estimated cost of projects in Toronto was \$23 million, but not one cent of government money came into the Ottawa valley, as far as I know.

Mr. Chambers: Would the hon. member permit a question? Is it more important for these communities to save money or to create employment?

Mr. Forgie: It is much more important to create employment. But you cannot lend money to small communities and charge 7 per cent. Surely the hon. member must realize how difficult it is for them to borrow money.

Mr. Chambers: We are offering them some.

Mr. Forgie: I will take the hon. member back with me at the week end and maybe he will bring some with him.

It should be fairly obvious that to make this winter program effective, surely the provinces should be notified well in advance. The municipalities should be notified well in advance also so that, in the event this money is available and they find it possible to use it, they could have their plans and specifications arranged long before than at present, and these specifications could be ready and the work could commence at once. In the case of building houses this work should be commenced before the fall. At Petawawa, where 400 houses are going up for the army, the foundations could have been dug and laid before the frost set in. If that had been the case, we could have had labouring people working on the 400 houses at Petawawa. But that was not the case, with the result that it will be next fall before these houses are completed. This would have been an excellent opportunity for the government to have

[Mr. Forgie.]

shown its sincerity of purpose on this question of winter money. If they had allowed work to proceed on the houses at Petawawa, we had plenty of labour to provide.

I think there must be a much more realistic approach to this question of unemployment. I think there are too many speculative intellects involved in this question of a winter works program. What we want are minds of men of action and this is not what we have at the present time. There is no manifestation whatever from the government that they are really taking this question seriously and, as previous speakers have said, this is a matter of national emergency.

As I have indicated, no municipality in my riding is sharing in this program. They cannot afford it. This government is too niggardly with its contributions to this winter works program. It should bear a greater share of the total cost of these works so as not to burden the municipalities, especially since they are now called on to borrow money at 7 per cent. Unemployment is a national problem and it has developed into a national crisis. That is one reason, and the main reason, why we are taking part in this debate today. The Prime Minister said:

I promise you this: as long as I am Prime Minister of Canada, everything that can be done, everything, without regard to limit, will be done, to the end that no one will suffer unduly.

That speech has not helped. If I may say so I think the right hon. gentleman's oft-quoted statement stands out like a red vest at a funeral as a masterpiece of political chicanery. They asked for bread, and the government has given them a stone. Remember, however, that chickens come home to roost.

This winter works program is not the solution to this problem of unemployment, nor is it even a palliative. The answer lies in finding some constructive plan that will wipe out the disease. The remedy may well lie in trade and vocational training. However, I see in the estimates that the vote for this aspect of education has been cut by \$1 million.

One of the problems facing Canada today is the lack of skilled labour. In the early part of 1940 it was decided to mechanize the Canadian army to the highest degree of efficiency, and to do this it became necessary to organize army trades training schemes. One such scheme was opened immediately in Hamilton where men were trained in the trades which were necessary before a mechanized force could be placed in the field. Other schools were opened to carry on this work.

I agree it would be next to impossible to overcome unemployment completely, because of climatic conditions in this country. There