

know how to produce in our factories, in our mines, and in our mills, and grow on our farms.

Finally he said:

What we need to do is to find a way to broaden the purchasing power base of our economic systems so that that purchasing power in the hands of people will balance our productive power in terms of these new tools that we are finding and science and technology is giving us every day in the year.

I believe Mr. Reuther was right when he referred to the necessity of placing purchasing power in the hands of the people, because if they have purchasing power they will purchase the things that are produced and industry will be thrown into high gear again to produce more goods. Unemployment will vanish and the needs of our people will be fulfilled. I would therefore, Mr. Speaker, request, as I have before, that some responsible minister explain to us why the government cannot or will not effect the necessary monetary reforms to produce the desired results. Increased purchasing power will create more jobs, and therefore as a member of a group that has offered suggestions and outlined a monetary plan that would solve the problem, I would ask the Minister of Finance (Mr. Harris) to state his views concerning the problem and concerning these proposals that have been advanced by this group.

Mr. J. A. MacLean (Queens): The problem of unemployment from a national point of view has been covered thoroughly in this debate, and it is not my intention to deal with it in general terms but that is not because I do not recognize the importance of the problem. As a matter of fact the unemployment situation in the country is quite serious at the moment. In yesterday's *Montreal Gazette* I noticed a statement to the effect that 7 per cent of our labour force is now unemployed, which is more than double the normal percentage. This article also points out that even at the depth of the world-wide depression in the thirties there was never more than 12 per cent of our labour force unemployed at any one time.

I, however, do not intend to deal with the problem on a national scale. I should like to direct my remarks for a few moments to the problem of unemployment in the maritime provinces. I know that this is a problem with which the Minister of Labour (Mr. Gregg) is specially familiar because he too is a maritimer. Nevertheless I take this opportunity to bring the situation to his attention once again. Unemployment for us in the maritimes is not new. That is probably the reason we have not expressed the degree of alarm expressed by members from other parts of the country, when they find the unemployment figures reaching such high levels.

Unemployment

Over the years in the maritime provinces we have had chronic unemployment. Ever since confederation the maritimes have been unable to supply employment to the natural increase in the labour force. In that time they have not been able to keep employed the numbers who gained their livelihood in that area years ago.

I note that in my own province of Prince Edward Island the total population in 1951 was 5,000 less than it was in 1901, or 50 years before. The result of this depressed economic condition in the maritime provinces is that there has been a continuous exodus of our best people from those provinces during that time. I am not suggesting that it is not a good thing for groups of our people to be employed in other parts of the country, thus adding to the strength and the leadership of the newer sections of Canada. But the unfortunate effect, so far as the maritime provinces are concerned, is that most of this exodus has been, not to other parts of Canada only, but to the United States, and chiefly to the New England states where we find approximately the same basic economic conditions as are found in our maritime provinces, and where, owing to the similarity of natural conditions, the opportunities should be no greater than in our own maritime provinces.

Unemployment figures for the maritimes do not have great significance because they represent only those who are at the moment unemployed in that area and who have not as yet given up hope of eventually being employed there. These are the people who are unemployed but who have not yet left the area to go somewhere else in search of employment.

In this connection I should like to quote from the *Labour Research* bulletin, the monthly publication of the research department of the Canadian Congress of Labour. In the January-February issue they deal at considerable length with the economic situation in the maritime provinces, and say at page 2:

Taking the three maritime provinces together there can be no question that the increase in employment since the end of the war has been very small, and of course far smaller than for the country as a whole.

Then it goes on to say:

For the three maritime provinces figures are available—

That is unemployment figures.

—for 52 dates, from February 23, 1946 to November 20, 1954. On every one of those dates the percentage of unplaced applicants to total supply in the labour market was higher than the national percentage, usually much higher. For 1946 it averaged over 50 per cent higher; for 1947 over 89