

provincial governments by means of grants in aid to discharge certain relief commitments. Within the last few months drastic relief regulations have been put into effect in most of the provinces. Some time ago single men were cut off relief in most of the larger cities. Married men with families are rapidly being taken off the relief rolls. My remarks will refer particularly to British Columbia because that is the province with which I am most familiar. The situation in Vancouver is quite desperate and is likely to lead to trouble unless something is done to ease the situation. I am given to understand that this is how the unemployed are dealt with. When it is considered that a relief recipient can meet the requirements for military service, relief is refused. Should the man attempt to enlist, as many have done, and be rejected, it is next to impossible for him to get back on the relief rolls. This treatment of the unemployed, particularly the married unemployed, has resulted in great hardship to the women and children.

There is a feeling abroad, particularly among persons in comfortable circumstances, that because we are at war there must be work for everybody. Unfortunately this is not the case and there is a great deal of unemployment. The latest figures from the bureau of statistics are generally a few months late. The May figures for unemployment are the most recent which I have been able to obtain. At the beginning of May it was estimated that there were 305,000 unemployed in Canada. That is a considerable amount of unemployment. I am sure that we shall not improve the situation to any extent by cutting people off relief in the hope that they will be able to find work. A person cannot find work unless there is work. The mere fact that there are hundreds of thousands of unemployed is sufficient proof that work is not available. I have often observed that the more cushy the position a person is in, the better he is provided for by the labour of others, the more he is appalled by the laziness and shiftlessness of the unemployed. This applies in particular to many of our municipal and provincial nincompoops in British Columbia, who have to do with unemployment and relief.

Another factor, which applies with more force to British Columbia than to the central provinces, is that British Columbia has not received the large volume of war contracts which the central provinces have had. That is one side of the picture.

There is also another side. Although there is undoubtedly more work this year than there was last year, many employers, instead of taking on more men, are compelling the workers already employed to work longer

hours. In British Columbia there is an hours of work law which limits the working day to eight hours, and the working week, I believe, to not over forty-four hours, but it is being violated right and left, and the government seems to be both deaf and blind to those violations. Many of the lumber mills, some of them working on war work, producing aeroplane lumber—I might mention the Cypress Spruce Lumber company of British Columbia—are working ten hours a day, six days a week. Employees in other companies are working ten hours a day for five days and nine hours on Saturdays. While these long hours of work prevail in some industries at the same time queues are lined up in front of the employment bureaux begging for work.

I know there is another item which deals with employment offices, but I think I shall say a word about them now so that I need not again address the committee on the subject. It would be appropriate action for the government to compel employers to register their needs for men with the employment offices. Many employers do not do this. I may be told that the federal government has now no jurisdiction in this matter. But may I point out that we are working under war conditions; and if the government has, as undoubtedly it has, the power to make all persons register and give their life histories, I see no reason why it is not competent to compel employers to register at the employment bureaux their needs for labour power.

At this time, when we require the cooperation and the good-will of everyone, it is peculiarly important that an effort should be made to create those conditions which will build the mental and emotional states necessary to a united effort. We cannot have the cooperation and good-will which are so much desired if many people are unemployed while others are working overtime. By allowing such a state of affairs to continue, we create ideal conditions for those who are interested in fomenting discontent. I would impress upon the minister and the government that every effort should be made to remove as far as possible even the slightest occasion for stirring up discontent. In these days we hear much about democracy. Let me say that we must make democracy something more than an abstraction if it is to mean anything to the unemployed and to the workers and farmers who just manage to exist but who have never lived. We must translate democracy into the amenities and the comforts of life if we are to obtain the cooperation and good-will so necessary to bring us success in our present effort. I implore the minister to take up this question with the provincial governments