

*Proposed Committee on Unemployment*

have given us their opinion concerning unemployment figures. We have had some from the Minister of Labour. Then, as they have taken part in the debate, various hon. members have given their particular interpretations.

I personally am not too greatly concerned as to whether the figure is 100,000, 300,000 or 500,000. It seems to me the thing that does and should concern us is the trend that is evidenced and the pattern of developments that is taking place in the Canadian economy. We find that the problem does present itself. I have here a clipping taken from the *Globe and Mail* headed "338,066 Seeking Work, Peak Since Wartime"; another one, "See 400,000 Drawing Jobless Benefits Soon"; "Lay Off 565 in Windsor"; "Say Unemployed Total 500,000" and so on. No matter which figures we take, it would seem to be evident that the problem exists and is here presented to us.

Moreover, we find the problem affects not only one particular industry but many. The parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Defence Production said that individual members have not presented figures substantiating the unemployment figures in their particular riding. I do not think that is absolutely necessary. If we are thinking just of our own particular ridings that criticism may be justified. But it would seem to me that we are facing a national problem. It therefore seems to me that we should take a look at the national picture. So, I am concerned not just about those who are idle in my particular riding of Fraser Valley; I am concerned about the fact that right across Canada men are out of work and are unable to obtain the necessities of life.

I have here a clipping from the *Financial Times* of February 12 headed, "Figures Show Another Bad Year Canadian Cotton Mills in 1953". We have been reminded about the delegation that waited upon the Acting Prime Minister (Mr. Howe) representing the laid-off implement workers. I have here another clipping from the *Globe and Mail* of February 12 headed, "Lay-off of 1,500 by C.N.R. Laid to Traffic Drop". I have other quotations with respect to the textile industry and so on. I mention these to show that it is not just one particular industry that is affected but workers in every section of our country.

Mr. Stuart Armour, economic adviser to the president of the Steel Company of Canada, speaking to the Kiwanis club of Hamilton on Tuesday, January 26, 1954, said this:

What, then, is the labour situation with which we Canadians are confronted today; and what are the economic implications of that situation? The situation appears at this juncture to be somewhat

obscure. On the one hand, the top brass of the organized labour movement in Canada apparently foresees a gloomier 1954 than do most business and government economists. On the other hand, some important labour unions, ignoring the warnings of their national presidents, appear to be framing demands which could only be acceptable if business was to be at a far higher level this year than in 1953.

And he referred to the words of Mr. Bengough:

... unemployment and underemployment are already serious in some industries and are on the increase throughout the whole of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, it seems to me the picture is presented to us, and we must face the fact that in Canada today there is a serious unemployment situation. To refer again to the speech made by the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Defence Production, he spoke of the danger of overemphasizing the problem because it may aggravate the situation. In other words it would seem as though we would say to the man who is hungry, "Do not tell anybody else about it, do not speak about it, because you might cause further discontent and further distress". Then the parliamentary assistant went on to say that he had listened in vain to the speeches from the opposition side for any suggestion of solutions to the problem.

I am a new member in the House of Commons, Mr. Speaker, or at least I was last fall. I may be misjudging the present government. Perhaps I am doing so. But so far I have not been able to see any inclination on their part to accept any suggestion from this side. Were anyone to get up and present a concrete proposal, I should just like to ask if it would be accepted and put into operation by the present government.

**Mr. Howe (Port Arthur):** Let us hear it anyway.

**Mr. Patterson:** I think possibly this is a problem for the government to take under advisement and solve. As I have said, I cannot see where they have been prone to accept any suggestions from anyone on this side of the house up to the present time.

**Mr. Studer:** Make a good one.

**Mr. Patterson:** I realize, Mr. Speaker, that we should not become hysterical over the situation that faces us. But when we have reference made to soup kitchens being established—and some members have made that reference—in order to meet emergencies, it reminds us of those years not so very long ago. I do not believe any one of us wants to see a repetition of those years, even members on the government side. We do not want to see a repetition of those past days.