

*The Address—Mr. Gillis*

able to face the future and work out our own destiny. That is one problem that can be solved and should be solved without further delay.

One of my main reasons for saying this session was reminiscent of 1939 is the unemployment situation. I remember that in 1939 and early 1940 you could go to Toronto and see the missions and church basements packed with unemployed. On the front page of today's *Globe and Mail* there is a picture of a few hundred of Toronto's unemployed huddled together in a basement mission. It was ten below zero outside when that picture was taken; they had no place to go, so they gathered there; and that situation is general across the country. We have 375,000 unemployed registered with the employment service, and the unemployment problem is serious. I am reasonably sure that another 100,000 could be added to the number of which the national employment offices have a record.

We should not start planning now to deal with this situation. I thought the planning was all done. During 1942 and 1943 a large committee of this house—again a committee—was set up, called the reconstruction committee. The members were serious; they were hard workers, and did a good job. We went all over Canada, taking industry after industry and making a survey of the possibilities of employment in the post-war period. We had before us the heads of the construction industry, and all large employers. They went to a great deal of trouble; they prepared briefs, and we blueprinted the employment possibilities in all our major industries. We had the labour bodies, the chambers of commerce and all the others, and they all submitted briefs. After that the federal government probed the possibilities of public works projects. A report was made to this house containing a blueprint of public works projects right across the country. That report was adopted unanimously. The policy of the government announced at that time and repeated many times later was that they would assist private industry in any section of the country, but that where private industry failed to solve the problem of unemployment and a higher standard of living the government would step in and supplement private enterprise. That planning was done; the blueprints were there, but they went to the archives and now we are facing what we planned against at that time.

There is no use planning unless you put your plans into operation. Yesterday I listened to the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent). I was rather disappointed when he said the unemployment was seasonal, that

it was regional and temporary. He went on to say that all the plans that had been made, including the shelf of public works to take up the slack of unemployment, had been practically thrown overboard, and that they could not do all the things they would like to do because they did not want to come into competition with private enterprise. The picture today of the developing unemployment problem shows clearly that private enterprise has fallen down in certain fields. The government program was intended to supplement private enterprise where it was not doing the job, which was to bring about as nearly as possible full employment. That program is gone. The shelf of public works is gone. After listening to the statement of the government's position by the Prime Minister I am afraid the problem is going to continue to grow. The government has nothing in mind to offset this increasing unemployment, and there is concern right across the country.

I am very disappointed that the government is not going to do anything to improve the situation. With regard to both these matters, the means test and the increasing unemployment, thousands of cards, letters and resolutions are being showered upon the members of this house. As far as the government are concerned, however, we have no program to deal with either of these matters in the immediate future. The speech from the throne says the government is going to broaden the scope of the Unemployment Insurance Act. That is no solution. They may take in the lumber workers, as they should have done long ago. They may extend it to other groups, but those other groups will have to make 180 contributions under the act before becoming entitled to relief, so that is not much of a solution.

Seventeen per cent of those 375,000 unemployed in this country today are without any income whatever. Seventeen per cent of them are not receiving benefits under the Unemployment Insurance Act. As the front page picture in the *Globe and Mail* indicates, they have no place to go, no place to sleep and don't know where breakfast is coming from tomorrow. It is difficult to make that person understand he is considered regional, temporary and seasonal. All he understands is that he has no place to sleep, and no breakfast tomorrow morning. These men are human beings. Every one of them is affected just as we would be. It would be cold comfort to read in the press that the official attitude of the government is that you are only regional, and seasonal. You have no feelings. We have no plans to do anything for you. I believe immediate relief should be made available to the municipalities.