

Proposed Committee on Unemployment

bring the matter to a conclusion. This is something. We hear the unions suggest more pensions, more money, higher rates for unemployment insurance benefits. That pamphlet has several pages, and in it you do not see two words which I would have expected from well-educated men that they are, namely "Thank you". I am surprised that those gentlemen did not thank the leader of the government and all his colleagues, including the Minister of Labour (Mr. Gregg) and the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Martin), for what has been done for the Canadian people by this government. We have to take the situation as we find it. They blame everybody for their own mistakes. The government is asked to improve conditions which have been made worse by those very people. The situation is unfortunate.

I do not want to dwell on the matter at any length. We all share the concern which has been expressed so eloquently by the hon. member for Cape Breton South (Mr. Gillis). We all know that he is sincere. He is one of the best debaters in the house and is listened to with attention when he speaks in debate. He said he was sorry when some of our fellow citizens were unemployed. We are all sorry. But the government has made things much easier for all those people. Just imagine, Mr. Speaker, what conditions would be like in Canada if we had to rely on social credit coming to the help of the unemployed. What would we do if everything were nationalized and we had not the revenue with which to pay them in good money all the benefits that are now given to them by the government? What would be the condition of affairs if the hon. gentlemen of the Progressive Conservative party were in power?

I remember when Mr. Bennett was the leader of the government. Before he came to that position he himself created unemployment, and for a good reason. He and his chief organizer in 1929—the year that has been referred to by the hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker)—each subscribed \$350,000 to the electoral funds and they invested that money in brokers' offices. The leader of the Conservative party—it was not progressive at that time—used to say "Conditions are bad; we have unemployment, but I will cure that". Every time he spoke of unemployment and said that conditions were bad in this country, the stocks were getting lower and lower and he was making more money because he was speculating on the fall in price. Finally, when he had realized an amount which was as much as his investment, he succeeded. He used that money to win the election. Afterwards he had to face the unemployment matter and he was not able to cure it. It was worse than ever. Let

[Mr. Pouliot.]

my friend the hon. member for Prince Albert be careful and not mention 1929 because I was in the house then and I remember what occurred at that time. I could tell him much more. If he were here in the house I would tell him much more about the policies of his own party at that time. But now there is no question of that.

We may have some unemployment to some degree at the present time but it is far from being as bad as it was then. There are compensations, inaugurated by the Liberal government, which the workers did not have at that time. Conditions therefore are not as bad now as they were then. I do not intend to make a political speech about the matter. I just wanted to remind the union leaders that they must be extremely careful in their dealings with the men, whether they are miners or are men engaged in other occupations. If there is more co-operation from the labour unions, and if they act in accordance with the democratic principle of consulting the members of their union before making pronouncements and giving orders, we shall have much more stability in employment in this country.

Mr. W. G. Blair (Lanark): Mr. Speaker, I am in full agreement with the necessity for a debate on unemployment. I am glad that this matter has been brought before the house by the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra (Mr. Green). There is no doubt about the emergency, and I congratulate the hon. member on his action in placing this matter before the house.

I should say that this is a matter that is of vital importance to the constituency which I have the honour to represent. In my riding there are twelve textile mills and one large manufacturer of farm implements, namely Cockshutt, Frost and Wood Company at Smiths Falls. Unemployment is really bad in my riding. With two industries affected, I consider the matter one of extreme importance. I consider it to be a matter which should be discussed in this house.

Last Wednesday we had a delegation from the works men in the Canadian farm implement industry who met with the Acting Prime Minister (Mr. Howe) and the cabinet with regard to the serious situation faced by that industry. There were also present delegates representative of the farm implement industry from sections such as Toronto, Hamilton, Brantford and Smiths Falls. It may be that there are 10,000 or more people affected. The fact that so many people are unemployed at the present time makes it a serious situation in these industrial areas.

Various causes were given for the unemployment but to my mind one of the most