

Proposed Committee on Unemployment

of the 500,000 people who are today unemployed, and something more will have to be done for these people than is being done now. We will have to have something more to say to them than, "Well, you had better go and look elsewhere for work." These people have established homes in their own little corners. In any community which is built around one industry these are mostly people who have gone into home building under government housing. It is not going to be very much of an encouragement to those who want to buy houses if they feel their plant may be closed down and they may be informed, "You had better look somewhere else for work." That will not encourage housing in Canada.

There should be established in Canada that type of government which will say to the old and disabled who cannot work, "There shall be assistance," and to every person who is willing and able to work, "There is a job for you." I do not believe we should be responsible for those who are able yet unwilling to work. But for those who are able and willing to work the Canadian people should be able to say that there is employment.

If we are to do this we shall have to do it now, because even a year from now the problem will have grown like a rolling snowball, to such an extent that it will be almost impossible for any government to deal with it. We have to gear Canadian production into a program which will provide gainful and useful employment for Canada's people and supply commodities that will meet competition in the world markets. That is the biggest order ever thrown to the government. I do not know whether they will be able to meet the challenge.

I believe that at the present time the Canadian people are willing to work. They are willing to go where there is work. I would say to the government that the Canadian people know we live in a land where there is an abundance of goods. We know the Canadian people are all trained or can be trained in the know-how. They will not stand very long for any administration which will permit unemployment and want.

The experience of the Canadian people with provincial and federal governments in the past has not been happy. There has been a change in my own province, the province of Saskatchewan. We lived and worked with the people who went through those sad days of unemployment and want in the west. So tightly were the government's hands bound during that period women and children hungered for bread in a land where the elevators were bursting with wheat. I want to

emphasize that so long as the present government in Saskatchewan remains in power there will be no hunger while elevators are filled with wheat.

If this government solves the problem that faces it this time, it will gain the confidence and respect of the Canadian people. If it does not it will be replaced by a government which will. But it will be a sad day for the Canadian people if they do not meet and overcome the present situation.

Mr. A. B. Patterson (Fraser Valley): Mr. Speaker, I do not believe I can be charged with monopolizing the time of this house; therefore I feel I am not imposing on hon. members by rising to take part in this debate.

Recently we have been discussing, and rightly so, some of the responsibilities we have to the people of other nations. Our world, which used to be so vast, has now seemingly become comparatively small. Those individuals who used to be so far away from us are now actually our next door neighbours. I recognize the fact that we have a responsibility to them and that we must discharge that responsibility.

However, since we have been debating these particular problems it has seemed to me that we must come to the point where we give serious attention to the problem that confronts us now right here in our own country. We are considering a problem of a very serious nature which faces us at the present time. It may be that some of us will try to justify the fact that a considerable percentage of the unemployment existing at the present time is more or less seasonal. We may try to delude ourselves into believing that the situation is not as serious as some may think. But I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that it is a serious proposition when there is one man who is unable to find employment and thereby meet the needs of himself and his family. It would be a serious matter if I were that individual. But when we multiply that by hundreds of thousands it seems to me that it becomes not only a serious matter but a tragic one. Those who are charged with the responsibility of giving leadership in government to the great Canadian people should set themselves to search out the causes of the problem and apply themselves to the task of finding a solution.

We have been listening to a great many figures. Personally I do not know which are right. I do not know whether anyone else knows, either. We have had figures given by the bureau of statistics. We have had some presented to us by the national employment service. The leaders in the field of labour