

*Proposed Committee on Unemployment*

right to make the statement, but the fact is that the responsibility does not rest with those men who work for wages in plants. And further, I think the employers in steel did not play ball; a later examination of their books discloses that they did not need that increase. They wanted to gouge the people while they were still war-minded and not paying very much attention to money. It is catching up on us now.

I just wanted to say that because I know the Acting Prime Minister wants to be and generally is fair. There is no one who could carry all that stuff in his head or who would be able to meet everything that came up and be absolutely accurate about it. I say those people in the house who pressured the government to remove price controls back in 1946, 1947 and 1948 are equally responsible with the government and with others outside the house who wanted controls off. "A free economy", they said "and you will have prosperity in Canada." All I have ever seen out of that so-called theory of a free economy is that you are free to go barefooted if you do not have shoes, or free to go hungry if you cannot get something to eat.

The only time during my lifetime when the economy has worked properly was during a period of war, when the government accepts responsibility to some extent for the management of the economy, and the allocation of manpower and materials in those directions where they will make the greatest contribution in a given situation. If a certain amount of that procedure were carried on in the post-war period I do not think we would be in this situation at all today.

We might as well be frank and face up to it, that so far as the mechanics of society is concerned, there is only one alternative to depression and unemployment, and that is war. And there is nothing wrong right now that a little war would not fix up. We do not want to forget that, and we want to be honest in facing it and do those things that are necessary to prevent this business of unemployment.

Some may say that it is all right to criticize, but I would tell them that I have all kinds of facts and figures to support what I say. I would turn, for instance, to an article by Clifford Scotton, a co-operative press association representative, who has made a very good analysis and certain recommendations. I shall not take the time of the house to read it. Then I also have a factual summing up by the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada and the Canadian Congress of Labour, in which certain recommendations are made. I imagine we have all that sort of thing we need on the record.

My colleagues and I have asked several questions in an effort to get the background of the government's thinking on this question of meeting unemployment. I wanted to know, for example, whether the government was doing any thinking or planning along the lines of what they are doing in the United States today under their defence manpower policy No. 4. They have a dozen of these policies, but this one deals with surveying the country in regions, and when unemployment reaches a certain figure in a certain region the United States government declares that a special region. Only last week Detroit was declared a special region. The government then begin to put any contracts they have to do with in that region, to direct contracts there. They will look at the industrial expansion of the country, and if it is necessary to put an industry in that region to overcome unemployment they will do it.

We are not doing that in Canada. The maritimes is one place where you might try to do something. The highest percentage of unemployment in the Dominion of Canada today is found in the maritime provinces. It tops the list. That is the official position taken by the minister's department in a recent statement I saw. That is a place where something could be done, and that is something the department should think about.

The government can take steps. The first thing the government has to understand is that it must accept some responsibility for talking to the people who are managing the economy of this country today. As a start, let us take the textile industry. I do not believe that any industry located in a town such as Marysville, New Brunswick, with 520 employees, with all kinds of institutions built around that particular industry over a long period of time, should be permitted to close its doors and wipe out the whole economic future of that community. It should not be permitted by either the federal or the provincial government. It is all right for an industry like that to come into a community, set up business and entice all kinds of investments around it, and stay there so long as it is making money; but as soon as the balance sheet is affected the wrong way it takes no social responsibilities. It closes its doors and walks out. That is true also of the coal industry.

The government has to enact some kind of laws that will prevent an economic upset of a whole community without any greater justification than that they are not making enough money.

What can you do? Well, I am going to make these few recommendations. The government should first act by undertaking the