

*Supply—Labour*

the headline reads, "Fewer Applicants Seeking Employment". That is as of February 12 instant. Some of the contents of this report should be brought to the attention of the house because it is wrong for us as elected representatives of the people to sit here and agitate and encourage a feeling of gloom and doom. The headline was:

Fewer Applicants Seeking Employment.

The article says, and I quote part of it:

Conditions in New Brunswick as reflected by the number of applicants registering at the national employment offices are still somewhat better than for the same period last year. R. P. Hartley, Q.C., regional director of the unemployment insurance commission said in making his regular monthly review.

Once again the unskilled construction worker led the list taking up 19 per cent of the total applicants.

Farther on the article says, and this is the point I want to emphasize because it is contrary to what any hon. member from New Brunswick or the maritimes has said in this debate:

All but 5 per cent of the applicants were receiving unemployment insurance benefits—

There is in excess of 30,000 people unemployed in the province of New Brunswick, and that is a very disturbing figure. However, for the first time 95 per cent of the people who are registered for work are now in receipt of benefits. I believe it would be of some benefit to this debate if we gave serious consideration to the types of people who are included in this list of about 790,000 people in Canada.

In the first place, mention has been made of the fact that there are nearly 100,000 married women—in fact, somebody says it is 166,000—on that list. I do not know what the exact figure is. I do know that if it were not for this government, and the legislation introduced in 1957, probably a number of these married women would not show in these statistics today, because they are now reporting for work, as they are obliged to do so if they want to continue receiving benefits. Then, too, a good percentage of the people included in this 790,000 would be retired pensioners who are registered for work in order that they can continue to draw unemployment insurance. I might mention that it is now possible for a man to accept his pension, and then draw unemployment insurance for upwards of one year. When you realize that he is drawing unemployment insurance and is in receipt of a pension, I think it should be obvious that he has some means of support.

Then this group includes that unfortunate type of citizen referred to as unemployable. There are no statistics to indicate the number

[Mr. Creaghan.]

of these people in this group, but we must realize that in every country of the world there is a certain percentage of the labour force who have mental or physical deficiencies which make it impossible for them to gain employment, even during the summer months. Consequently, they are continuously registered for work and add to this figure which we are discussing here.

We have a fourth group included in this 790,000, which I call people who are now employed but who are dissatisfied with their working conditions or wish to change their jobs because of frictions where they are now working or to improve their incomes.

If we can discount the hundreds of thousands in these four categories, I think we will find that the figure is not so alarming as some hon. members would like us to believe. Comparisons with the 30's are just as ridiculous. The population in this country has more than doubled since the 30's and there are now more people employed than probably at any time in Canada's history. I feel quite confident that we will have more people working in Canada each year. It is only since June, 1957 that we have heard of a winter works program. It is only since June, 1957 we have heard of the program known as roads to resources. Both of these items have done a great deal to improve winter working conditions in Canada.

However, we must bear in mind what I said at the outset, that winter works programs are simply schemes to ease the hardship caused by the length of the winter. I admit that these programs cannot in any way assist the tradesmen laid off from the Moncton shops. It is impossible for the Canadian National or any private industry to take advantage of this \$15 million. The only thing the Canadian National employee can do, after he has been laid off, is to register for work. If he does he must necessarily accept unskilled work at a very, very low rate of pay. Consequently, this vote cannot in any way help the electricians, carpenters, machinists, boilermakers, and so on, and it was not designed to do so. The only way that these men will be able to find work is for this government, particularly the Minister of Labour and the Minister of Transport, to urge management to make plans for winter works, and to give more guidance to large national concerns that have lay-offs in the wintertime.

This vote is designed for one thing, and that is to make it possible for the unskilled worker who generally works for a department of public works or contractor to get work in the wintertime. One criticism I have, which I think should be brought to the attention of the minister, is a report I have received that