

Supply—Labour

Mr. Walker: May I ask the hon. gentleman a question?

Mr. Pickersgill: Yes.

Mr. Walker: Does my hon. friend not agree that the average expenditure under Liberal administrations from 1945 to 1957 was less than \$90 million a year and our average has been \$210 million a year? Does that not answer the question? In addition, 660,000 houses have been built.

Mr. Pickersgill: The hon. gentleman has asked his question but perhaps he might save his speech until I have finished. The hon. gentleman is boasting that this government has spent more than the Liberal government. I will not argue with him. They have spent more on everything. They have put the country hopelessly into debt, but they have not corrected unemployment with public works and that is what was promised. That promise has not been kept. Neither has the promise been kept that everything, without regard to limit, would be done. Neither has the promise been kept that there would be no suffering regardless of deficit financing.

But there was an even more far reaching promise than that, sir, and it is very directly related to this vote. At Brantford on February 17, 1958, the Prime Minister said:

The people who are unemployed will not be put in the false position of being put on relief.

Let me repeat that:

The people who are unemployed will not be put in the false position of being put on relief.

The Chairman: I hesitate to interrupt the hon. member, but his time has expired.

Mr. Chevrier: May I bring to Your Honour's attention the fact that the speech of the hon. gentleman was interrupted by points of order and in that case I submit to you, sir, he has the right to go on for another 30 minutes.

The Chairman: As I understand it, the hon. member only yielded the floor for points of order which do not constitute a ground for extending the time of the hon. member.

Mr. Chevrier: He yielded the floor to the Minister of Public Works.

The Chairman: That is so, he yielded the floor, but it was on his own time that the question was answered.

Mr. Pickersgill: I have really reached the termination of my remarks, anyway. I just wanted to point out that, the Prime Minister having promised that no one would go on relief, the government now boasts about increasing relief by 800 per cent.

(Translation):

Mr. Brassard (Lapointe): Mr. Chairman, I should like to add a few words to those

[Mr. Pickersgill.]

of my colleagues concerning the \$25 million which the government is about to grant to the unemployment insurance commission.

When, in 1958-59, we asked the government to admit that there was in fact an unemployment problem, we were accused then, as we have been again this afternoon, of being prophets of doom and gloom. Now, if we refer to the 1946-1957 period and determine the yearly average of the percentage of the labour force who were unemployed, we find that it did not exceed 3 per cent. I am speaking of the average per year. In June 1957, when we handed over the administration of this country to the present government, there were approximately 160,000 men and women without work. By early autumn, in that same year, there were already 225,000.

I do not wish to dwell on that question, but I would like to offer the Minister of Labour (Mr. Starr) a suggestion. Two years ago, while discussing the estimates of his department, I spoke about industrial mechanization. Our production methods are improving all the time. Some people say that automation only cuts down the number of jobs while others, on the contrary, claim that besides improving production methods, automation makes for new jobs which in many cases, are better paid.

It seems to me that efficiency in industry is today one of the main economic challenges of our time. Production is not everything. You must also dispose of your production. Since our domestic market, in many sectors, cannot consume all our national output, we must look for foreign outlets. We must then take into account the fact that we have to compete with other nations.

In their report number 8 on the advent of automation, the research services of the Department of Labour said that the impact of the technological advance on employment varies from one area to the other. Reference is made, for instance, to other jobs and to the ability of some people to adapt themselves to other kinds of work. Reference is also made to collective bargaining and other factors.

Some people would resist automation. In my opinion, it is imperative that we adapt ourselves to the times in which we are living, and that we take the necessary steps to be able to do so. Even the most vocal advocates of industrial automation are showing some concern about the future of mankind, on account of that technological revolution now bursting upon the world, and in this country particularly.

I think we must be prepared to face a profound transitional period as well as a sort of industrial upheaval.