

Proposed Committee on Unemployment

like myself it gives you quite a lift. So I feel quite badly in having to bring some of the facts of life to the ministers' attention.

Now let us see what the situation is. It is admitted that there is some unemployment in Canada, but there is a question of how much. The Minister of Trade and Commerce said, very generously, that we should be concerned about even one person who is unemployed. But I can assure him that one person unemployed could not get anywhere, because he could not squawk loudly enough. The more unemployed there are, the more likely something will be done for them because of the greater noise they will make. In the world we are living in today, if you cannot make a noise you are in a bad way; your case is a bad one indeed.

As I said, there is agreement that there is some unemployment. The Minister of Trade and Commerce as well as the Minister of Labour have said, "But wait; the possibilities for investment this year are real good. Some time before the year is out we will start the St. Lawrence waterway. That should be under way before the end of next year." That is what the Minister of Trade and Commerce said just a moment ago.

Mr. Howe (Port Arthur): The end of this year.

Mr. MacInnis: And he says to the unemployed, "Now, if you fellows can hold on until next December you will have a job, maybe." They both agree on that, that everything will be all right if the unemployed can only hold on. Spring will come to the rescue. Korea came to the rescue in 1950. I hope we will not have another Korea in 1954.

The ball is then thrown over to the official opposition. They go over the situation and find that there is considerable unemployment, that it is quite serious indeed. But what do they want to do? They want to refer it to a committee; and by the time the committee is finished it is spring again, and the unemployed are in just the same position under the Conservative amendment as they were before. The situation will be just the same as far as the unemployed are concerned, whether it is left to a committee or left with the government. They say that spring is coming, when things will begin to show up; and that is the talk we are handing out to the unemployed all across Canada.

I tell you that kind of policy will not provide bread, will not provide shelter, will not provide jobs. Surely we have had enough experience with the sort of conditions that existed when my hon. friends took over in 1936, or in late 1935. Surely they have

[Mr. MacInnis.]

learned something from the conditions they found, until the war rescued us in 1939 and 1940, that they should have been ready now with some concrete proposals the unemployed could get their teeth into. But they are not. We are just as Micawber-like as we were in the 1930's.

Then, as usual, the hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker) went over the whole gamut of items—the government in industry in Saskatchewan, the dead weight of taxation, the wheat surplus, the estimates, last year's election, the sales tax, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, and a number of other things. He said that these are some of the things that could be discussed in the committee—that is what we are going to have the committee for—to go all over the issues that were discussed during the election last July and August. Let me tell the official opposition again that that, any more than the government's do-nothing policy, will not feed and clothe and shelter the unemployed.

Probably one of the strangest things said during this debate was by my good friend the Minister of Labour. It is said that the human being can rationalize his behaviour in the most unsocial or anti-social circumstances. There is nothing so vile he can do but, given the opportunity, he can prove to you that it was done for somebody else's good. The Minister of Labour went over pretty much the same ground as the Minister of Trade and Commerce. As reported at page 1447 of *Hansard* he said:

The current unemployment situation is not entirely due to the seasonal factors which I have mentioned although there are indications that the amount of purely seasonal unemployment is greater than in recent years . . . These industries are not operating at capacity employment levels for various reasons. For some, import competition has become keener. This has been particularly true in the case of clothing, textiles and electrical appliance industries. Others, such as sawmilling, farm implements and certain base metal producers have found world markets becoming increasingly competitive. Forestry operations in eastern Canada are currently proceeding at the low levels of last winter, partly because of improved technology in forestry operations and partly because of softer lumber and pulp markets. In most of these industries, there has been some accumulation of inventories at various levels of production and distribution, and employment in several industries is reflecting the consequent adjustments.

Then he went on to say this:

The government is not ignoring the problems of these industries which are encountering difficulties in adjusting to a more competitive situation in both the domestic and foreign markets.

In effect what is the Minister of Labour saying there? Only this, that there is an accumulation of goods on the market—overproduction, if you like—and because there is overproduction, the people who produced the