

Supply—Labour

I do not, however, see where he might answer the questions asked by the senior member for Halifax with respect to the question having to do with the employment of people over forty, except on this item.

Hon. Humphrey Mitchell (Minister of Labour): I do not intend to speak for long, Mr. Chairman. If you cannot say what you want to say in twenty minutes, I believe you should not get on your feet.

Mr. Harkness: You have been getting up at the wrong time, then.

Mr. Mitchell: I believe that also. More people talk themselves out of this place than ever talked themselves into it.

Mr. Harkness: Give us a demonstration.

Mr. Mitchell: Just look at me. The first question raised by the hon. member for Calgary West, the hon. member for Cape Breton South and the hon. member for Vancouver East was with regard to communism in trade unions. I think that events have vindicated the position taken by all parties in the house on that problem when we framed the Industrial Relations and Disputes Investigation Act, leaving it to the trade unions themselves to discipline these people within their own ranks, having regard to the educational facilities that are provided by adopting a policy of that description. I think it is far better to do that than to pass laws such as those that are in force in some countries, although we were strongly advised to do so. My hon. friends who have lived in the same atmosphere as I have lived practically all my life know quite well that you cannot declare an organization illegal, particularly when you are dealing with communists who have no morality whatsoever, and where they change the name of their organizations every day in the week to suit their purposes. I think it might also be truthfully said that the industrial conditions in this country have vindicated the sound common sense shown by all of us in the framing of that legislation. Everybody did not get his own way. As I have said before, this is the genius of our constitution which is based on the spirit of compromise.

The question of industrial pensions was mentioned, I believe, by the senior member for Halifax and by the hon. member for Cape Breton South. I am speaking now as an individual. I think the position taken by both of my hon. friends is a sound one, in that once you make an agreement with a private employer for a pension scheme, there is no guarantee that that business will be in existence ten years from now. I do not care who it is, there is no guarantee. A representative of one of the largest corporations in North

America came to see me not long ago, as both sides have been coming to see me for advice or otherwise—and sometimes otherwise.

Mr. Knowles: Which did they get?

Mr. Mitchell: They got the best advice I could give them; and I might say that it does not cost them anything. You can get a great deal of advice that you pay plenty of money for; you can get advice of the character that you want to hear, and you pay well for it.

Mr. Knowles: "If it is not hard to get, it is not worth anything" is the minister's motto.

Mr. Mitchell: I agree with my hon. friend that there is no guarantee that the largest corporation in North America will be in existence ten years from now. There may be mistakes on either side that will send these companies into liquidation, and all their schemes will fall to the ground. Do not forget this fact also. No one yet has ever sat down and figured out, on the basis of the purchasing power of the dollar, whether the economy of North America can stand a pension plan of \$100 a month. What I mean is this. I have been in trade unions when we set up insurance schemes, with all the best intentions in the world, and found that we reached a stage where the schemes were proved to be actuarially unsound in the light of experience. That is why I believe in the contributory system under the state itself.

I think that what we all should do is this. All these things must be paid for. I think the recipients should know the cost before they go into any undertaking of that description. In my judgment, there is a limit to taxation of the individual. I am not speaking as some people do. I am speaking of the individual and the producer; that is who pays. In all these schemes of social welfare, it is a matter of distribution of the national wealth. Following the suggestion of the hon. member for Lethbridge, if you get the old printing press out, you can guarantee any amount of pension; all you have to do is to turn the handle. But in so doing you reduce the real value of the pension that was promised when the scheme went into operation.

I cannot quarrel with the approach of the hon. member for York South to the question of education. I can truthfully say that I arrived in Canada on Wednesday evening, got a job on Thursday morning, and have never been out of work for one day since then. As I have said before, I may have been fortunate, but I came with a good trade in my hands. Somebody must do the work in a nation. Everybody cannot go to university. More fools come out of universities than ever came out of technical schools.