

Unemployment

Mr. H. W. Herridge (Kootenay West): Mr. Speaker—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Herridge: If hon. members will be patient for a moment or two they will see that I shall not take much of the time of the house. Because of having to attend several committee meetings, I have not had the opportunity to participate in this most important debate. However, with full knowledge of the serious nature of the unemployment situation in Canada and a great personal concern about that situation as it affects many Canadians, I rise at this time simply to express my support for the amendment to the amendment moved by the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam (Mr. Regier). I also wish to express my support of the vigorous pleas made by members of this group to the government to do something to remedy this most unfortunate situation.

May I also say I was particularly taken with the excellent speech made by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, in which he visualized a long-term plan that would reach its consummation in the year of the 100th anniversary of this country. I thought he outlined a number of practical proposals that should appeal to the imagination of the government and the people of Canada. I trust that as the result of this debate the government will take some immediate action to remedy the present situation and develop long-term plans so that this unnecessary evil, unemployment, will be banished from Canada for all time.

Some hon. Members: Question.

Mr. E. G. McCullough (Moose Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I could not let this opportunity pass—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. McCullough (Moose Mountain):—without having something to say about the serious problem facing Canada today.

Mr. Dickey: Have you got anything to say?

Mr. McCullough (Moose Mountain): I am quite certain that the 600,000 unemployed indicated by the statistical figures—

An hon. Member: Repetition.

Mr. McCullough (Moose Mountain):—will not be smiling tonight but will be taking their situation quite seriously. I feel that the speeches that have been made in the house asking the government to be serious about this problem will, if nothing else, surely bring about some action rather than the sit-down strike which seems to be in force on that side of the house. It is not sufficient for

[Mr. Winch.]

Liberal members to say they are concerned. What the people want is action.

It seems to me that once again history has repeated itself. We have gone the full cycle of the threat of war, then war, then a period of prosperity, and now once again the beginning of a period of depression. Certainly there is no member on either side of the house who can get up tonight and say there is any program under the capitalist system by which our people can be given useful employment. They simply have not brought forth such a plan.

When we on this side of the house make certain representations to the government they and their supporters more or less laugh at them. We are faced today with perhaps the last chance to bring democracy to the world. I say to those on the other side of the house who espouse democracy that unless we can bring about that democracy in the social and economic spheres of the world we are not going to win against communism, and they can chuckle in their collars about that if they like. That is the problem facing the world at this time.

Here in Canada we have our own serious problem. I do not think it behooves us to look far afield and find trouble with other types of economies unless we can do better at home than we have done. The latest figures published by government departments indicate that there is a continued increase in unemployment, and it is surely up to the government to get busy and do something about it.

I have already stated that it seems the cycle of history is repeating itself. I say that with good reason, because today the farmers in this country are suffering from a loss of markets as a result of the capitalist philosophy of so-called overproduction. The farmer has been too progressive, too good in his husbandry, and has produced more than people can eat. Yet we find that the nations of the world have not been able to use these foodstuffs to feed the hungry.

One could readily understand what a real problem it would be if it were one of trying to produce enough food for the people. But when it is possible for Canada and the United States, which are both capitalist countries, to produce an abundance of foodstuffs and other things to enable their people to have a high standard of living, yet no way is found to give these people an opportunity of enjoying those things, then surely any person with any sanity at all will agree that something is decidedly wrong. All we in this group are asking is that those who sit on the government benches do something about it. If you have an answer, then we