

*Proposed Committee on Unemployment*

unemployment situation, then I fear it is too late. But I shall be really disappointed in my hon. friend the Minister of Labour (Mr. Gregg), who I know was an excellent soldier, if he has not thought far enough ahead to have some plans ready in case there is an extension of the emergency which is now upon us in a mild form. I believe the government should have available some schemes for the immediate future to cope with the situation as it exists today.

When I commenced speaking I stressed the point, and I repeat that this is a recurring problem of seasonal unemployment. That being the case, should we not now start to consider what steps can be taken in order to meet that unemployment which is inevitable next winter? There will be some unemployment during the summer season, when the camps have to close down on account of the fire hazard, but usually that period of unemployment adjusts itself. But next winter there is no doubt we shall be faced with this same problem of seasonal unemployment again.

Earlier this session I called attention to the fact that there was a shortage of reserves for our armed forces. In my speech last December I quoted at some length statements made by General Gruenther, supreme commander of NATO forces. I am not going to repeat his statements again except to quote a few lines from a speech made by General Gruenther at Copenhagen, when he was addressing United Nations commanders. He said:

The creation of adequate reserve forces means that a large proportion of NATO manpower will have to devote a considerable time each year to reserve training. That is inconvenient for the individual concerned and of course it tends to create economic strains.

It is inconvenient to the individual concerned if he has to do his reserve army or naval training at a time when he is fully employed, but it is not such a great inconvenience to him if his reserve training can take place at a time when he is not employed, owing to the seasonal nature of his employment.

I think it would be worth while exploring that situation. Canada, as a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, has, as part of her military objectives, the provision of reserves. This is not the place to emphasize the importance of these reserve forces, as that will be done in other debates; and indeed the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Claxton) and others have repeatedly emphasized it. In fact so concerned was the minister that last summer a committee of three distinguished ex-officers was appointed to consider how best they could build up the reserve forces of this country.

I would suggest that those men who are periodically laid off because of the seasonal nature of their employment, and who have not become established with the security of their own homes to which they can go when unemployed, might be provided with army and navy training at that time.

Take the fishing industry, for example. Might it not be worth while considering the reorganization and revitalizing of the fishermen's reserve of the navy, which used to provide opportunities for fishermen, during the off-season, to take their training with naval vessels at various stations on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts? I presume that something along the same lines existed on the Atlantic coast, where there is also seasonal unemployment. When this fishermen's reserve was active in pre-war days the fishermen, because of their familiarity with the sea, were excused certain elementary training which was given the usual reservists for the navy, and those fishermen were permitted to complete their courses in the various trades.

Today there are many more trades than there used to be, and these men have found that the instruction they received there not only qualified them as naval reserves, but also helped them become more efficient in their own particular trades. I would suggest that the extension of reserve naval training for fishermen is a line which might well be investigated by the Minister of Labour or by the committee on industrial relations when they consider this question of seasonal unemployment.

The same sort of thing applies with regard to young men who are employed in the logging camps. On several occasions in the past I have suggested that, in order to build up the reserve forces of this country, we should not insist too much upon those who are prepared to take military training having to join definite units of the reserve army. I feel that we should take advantage of the system of training which was developed during the war in the basic training camps. If we could take that as a model and take advantage of our experience in pre-war days, when schools were conducted throughout the country during the winter time; if we could also gain such information as is available, with regard to citizen training camps which were in existence in the United States in the period between the first and the second wars, there is a possibility of instituting some form of citizen training camps located at convenient places, with courses conducted at times of seasonal unemployment.