

Unemployment

some who are unable to find employment and to provide for the needs of their families.

Recriminations have been hurled against past and present governments for failure to take measures that would promote full employment. Various fields have been crossed and crisscrossed in an attempt to discover the factors contributing to the situation existing today. Discussions have tried to establish the nature of our problem, as to whether it is regional, frictional or what-not. It would therefore appear that practically every angle of the problem has been discussed during the debate.

I do not think that the government can say that no solutions have been suggested by the members of the opposition. I think it was implied, at least on one occasion yesterday, that the opposition members have not as yet submitted any proposals designed to meet the situation. Many proposals have been advanced. Some have been perhaps conventional and orthodox while others may appear to be somewhat unorthodox. On March 2, suggestions were made by the hon. member for Bow River (Mr. Johnston) with respect to this matter and they were further emphasized by the hon. member for Acadia (Mr. Quelch). On March 15 and 16 the hon. member for Lethbridge (Mr. Blackmore) outlined monetary reforms or, should I say, methods of financing which in the past have been used to good advantage in times of emergency, and he suggested that those measures that were used to finance war could be used to finance peace.

As all hon. members know, I am a comparative newcomer in the house, and I should like to hear some responsible member of the government give his views with respect to the procedures outlined by the hon. member for Lethbridge, or, in other words, the suggestions that have been made by this group time and time again in the past with regard to financing. I know there have been those across the way who have hurled taunts at this side. There are those who have been critical. But since I have come into the house we have not heard any responsible member of the government give his views with respect to those suggestions and proposals that have been made. We are facing a crisis. I think even the government acknowledges the fact that we are facing a crisis. We must therefore consider every proposal which promises a solution to the problem.

A number of members have referred to the dominion-provincial conference on reconstruction that was held several years ago. I understand that at that time the dominion

government proposed to accept full responsibility for assistance to able-bodied unemployed persons. The suggestion or the charge has been made that, up to the present time, the government has not seen fit to implement that proposal. On the contrary, I think the government have rejected and have refused to fulfil that proposal which they made back at that conference.

The premier of British Columbia made an appeal for assistance for the unemployed employables but we all remember how that request was rejected and how the implication, if not the plain statement, was made that the federal government did not accept responsibility and that the provincial government had not proved that it was unable to solve the problem and to meet the financial responsibilities involved.

On February 25, as reported at page 1501 of *Hansard*, the hon. member for Broadview (Mr. Hees) directed a question to the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) with respect to the matter. He asked if the premier of British Columbia had made a request that a dominion-provincial conference be called to deal with unemployment. The reply of the Prime Minister on that occasion was that the premier of British Columbia wrote on July 14 with respect to this problem and stated:

The wisdom of holding a federal-provincial conference may commend itself to you.

The Prime Minister went on to say that he could not construe that letter as being a request. I would suggest that the question was there and the request was involved; it was included. But yet on that occasion, as we know, the request was not acceded to.

As to the unemployed employables, the British Columbia government responded to the challenge presented by the failure of the federal government to assume their responsibilities in this respect and agreed to an 80-20 split with regard to the expenses involved. This was done in spite of the fact that the British Columbia government in the past and up to the present has been receiving rather shabby treatment from the federal government in some respects. We all recognize, of course, the fact that the federal government have the major source of revenue in the various provinces, and we expect them at least to assume the responsibilities that are rightfully theirs.

In this connection I could refer to various matters, but I am not going to do so at any length. However, I feel that these matters are closely allied to the problem of unemployment. May I refer to some of the treatment that has been handed out to the province of British Columbia by the federal government. For instance, may I refer to the