

right, however, then he exaggerates by just about one hundred per cent. Here is the paragraph in question:

Notwithstanding the embarrassments and handicaps encountered in coping with the problem of unemployment, it is gratifying to be able to record that, during the past year, there has been a material reduction in the number of those receiving agricultural aid, and a reduction also in the total number of those receiving public assistance due to unemployment and agricultural distress.

And then comes the part to which I draw particular attention and which I question:

At the beginning of the present winter the number of those receiving such public assistance was almost forty per cent less than two years ago.

I do not know where the right hon. gentleman got his information but I could not get any such information as that. I have endeavoured honestly to get it, but the information given me is entirely at variance with this paragraph. I find in the report released by the Minister of Labour (Mr. Rogers) on January 14—only two days ago—that the total number on relief at the present time amounts to 809,000. So far as I have been able to ascertain—and there is some difficulty in getting actual facts—in November of 1936 there were 1,046,000 on relief. A comparison of the two figures indicates a decrease of only 22.68 per cent, not 40 per cent, as the right hon. gentleman has suggested.

I have no objection to the right hon. gentleman setting me right at the present time, if he knows how to do it, because I do not wish to misrepresent his position. But I know of no figures differing from those I have given. If the right hon. gentleman would prefer to substantiate his figures when he is on his feet, it will be all right with me. I must point out however that I am giving the figures I received, as I got them, and according to those figures the number on relief in November, 1938, as compared with the number in the same month of 1936, has been reduced by only 22.68 per cent. The right hon. gentleman may have been thinking of another month; that is possible. I do not know whether he did take a different month, and it is a fact that different months vary. I know only this, that I have given the facts as I received them. I believe November is the beginning of winter in Canada. Perhaps there was some such difference in some of the summer months, but in my comparison I am sticking to the beginning of winter, to his own words, "at the beginning of the present winter," and I repeat that winter in Canada begins about November.

That is one statement in the speech from the throne to which I take exception, because it is not in accordance with the facts.

Then, in the same paragraph we find this:

Over the same period the number of persons actually in employment has largely increased.

That of course is a period of two years. I admit the fact, but I also point out that according to the best authority I can get the number of unemployed also has increased.

The next paragraph begins in this way:

Continuous improvement in the position of the fishing industry as a whole has been reflected—

And so on. That statement is very much disputed. There has been a great deal of dispute about the fishing industry. My opinion is that those engaged in the fishing industry would not agree that their conditions are much better, if indeed they are any better. It is reported by fishing people, particularly from around Nova Scotia, that a large portion of the population in that section of the country is in very bad shape, even in so far as earning a living is concerned.

There is one paragraph I miss from the speech from the throne of this year which did appear in the speech of last year, the one in which the right hon. gentleman boasted a little bit about conditions—and I do not use the term offensively. This paragraph appeared in the speech from the throne delivered on January 27, 1938:

It is gratifying to note that, during the past year, there has been a further substantial advance in Canada's economic recovery. Revenues have reached new levels. Trade with other countries has materially expanded. There has been a general increase in employment and a marked decrease in the numbers receiving unemployment aid.

He did not mention that this year. He did not mention improved conditions; he could not truthfully do so, because conditions generally have gone back. My authority for this is not the Minister of Labour but my hon. friend the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Euler), who issued a statement around the turn of the year, as did a number of other ministers. He was quite right in doing that, but I should like to give a few quotations from his statement. He said that business had shown a slight falling off, that manufacturing had been slightly lower and that construction contracts were down 17 per cent. I might interject here that construction contracts never did go up very far. They have gone down despite the fact that they were well down anyway. He stated that the gross earnings of the railways were down \$10,000,000 in the first ten months, and that retail sales were lower.