

*Unemployment*

a final report which I have before me, and which was submitted to the minister of labour on January 26, 1939, some 16 years ago. Unfortunately nothing has been done to implement any of these recommendations. Admittedly the war intervened, and in its early years the slack on the labour market, which included a good many young Canadians, was quickly taken up. They enlisted in the armed forces in large numbers.

Following the war the problem could again be ignored because Canada was passing through a period of unprecedented prosperity; and while there was some seasonal unemployment it was met by the voluntary welfare organizations, particularly in 1948, when the problem became more noticeable than it had been since the thirties. But since the war our economy has been buoyant enough to absorb the harsher aspects of this continuing difficulty.

We in this group have always maintained that the post-war prosperity was an artificial prosperity. It was the result of the world economic dislocation which placed Canada in a temporarily advantageous position. We have warned down through the years, and even at the peak of prosperity in 1951 when I came into this house, that sooner or later there would be a day of reckoning. Canada had primary resources which the world was seeking, and our limited industrial capacity was taxed to its limit to supply the overwhelming demand for consumer goods that arose from the dislocation of the post-war world.

We on this side of the house have maintained, too, that this essential emphasis on primary resources would in the long run fail to provide a large and expanding market for an increasing labour force, and that prophecy has now been fulfilled. In this country we have lacked the necessary vocational and technical training opportunities to provide our young Canadians with the skills necessary for an industrial society.

Although the question of education does not come directly within our sphere of interest, we have had discussions from time to time in this house which have emphasized the financial crisis in education. That financial crisis has been reflected in the inadequate provision of vocational training opportunities for our young people. It is significant today, Mr. Speaker, that there is no shortage of work for Canadians who have special skills. It is largely in the unskilled labour categories that we have the great mass of unemployment, and if only we could stimulate secondary industry based on our possession of vast primary resources I am certain we

could then easily take care of the slack that has appeared in our economy during the past two or three years.

I referred to complacency on the part of the government with regard to unemployment in the initial stages of this session. I am almost convinced sometimes, though there are exceptions, of course, as I sit and listen to the government spokesmen, that the government has mesmerized itself into feeling that all is for the best in the best of all possible worlds. Notwithstanding the evidence of the growing numbers of unemployed the government appears to subscribe to the philosophy that every day in every way we are getting better and better. It is either a failure to face reality or a case of self-hypnosis on the part of the government; and of course there are none so blind as those who will not see.

In view of the recent statistics which have been released on unemployment I think the time for complacency is past and, as I have already said, I am making a special appeal on behalf of the unemployed employables, those young Canadians who are not provided for in any way during this critical period and who must fall back on the voluntary welfare organizations for any assistance that is available. As indicated by the Canadian Welfare Council in the information the council put before members of the house, welfare organizations are hard-pressed to meet this growing demand.

In referring once again to the report which was submitted to the minister of labour, Mr. Rogers, on January 26, 1939, I shall re-emphasize some of the points which were laid down in that report. In order to deal with this problem of unemployment at all three levels of government and particularly at the federal level, it is necessary to have some method of defining "residence". The transient or migrant is largely a rolling stone gathering no moss. The municipality will not accept responsibility for him; the province ignores him, and of course the federal government is too remote to have any direct interest in his special difficulties.

In this report by the special committee of 1939 it was laid down as a fundamental necessity that the levels of government should get together in conference and define residence qualifications. Otherwise the problem would continue to be put off indefinitely. Direct consideration of the problem has been delayed for 25 years. Surely during the present critical time we might try to deal directly and satisfactorily with this difficulty.

It is necessary to define who come within the category of local residence, so the municipalities might be aware of their particular