

different interests in the country likely to be most concerned in this problem; that there should be represented at that conference the Dominion government, the provinces, the leading municipalities, important industrial enterprises such as the great railway systems, representatives from the Chamber of Commerce of the Dominion, from the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, from the Dominion Trades and Labour congress, from other labour organizations, from the Salvation Army, from the Red Cross, indeed, from all those organizations that are familiar with phases of these great social questions; that that conference of men and women informed on matters of the kind should be allowed to discuss what measures in their opinion should be adopted. Then out of their number to be nominated by them, or from among others whom the government might wish to select as a representative body, there be a committee or commission appointed and that body given charge of the whole question of unemployment relief. That step ought to have been taken two years ago, and it ought to be taken to-day. The problem is away beyond the capacity of the government let alone any department of government. After all, departments of government have been formed to carry on ordinary routine work. At the moment I see the Minister of Labour (Mr. Gordon) looking over at me. May I remind him that his predecessor found not only that the problem was too great for a single department of government to cope with, but that, as a consequence of his efforts as a minister to cope with a problem that was far too great for any minister of any government to handle, his health became shattered and that he himself became an invalid for the remainder of his days. It is not fair to any individual minister of the crown that a great burden of this kind should be thrust upon him. A great social need such as exists at the moment requires to be dealt with in a larger way.

There was another suggestion. We have under the National Research Act an Honorary Advisory Council on Scientific and Industrial Research. The government may bring together experts on any subject and allow them to make recommendations to the administration as to how great questions of scientific and industrial concern should be dealt with. The hon. member for Red Deer (Mr. Speakman) suggested in the house two years ago that under the National Research Act a body of experts should be brought together to deal in some part with this question of unemployment. I heartily commended his views

at the time, and I urged them again and again upon the government. I suggested an advisory body such as the Advisory Board on Tariff and Taxation under the Liberal administration; a body of men and women well informed and at least able to give advice of an expert nature. It is not belittling a government to ask it to accept expert advice on great social and economic problems. It is what is done in all countries. It is what is done by any government that desires to get the best and latest information to guide it in its work of administration. A body of that kind should be brought together. The Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Stevens) himself said that this might be done; but it has not been done and, indeed, nothing of any kind has been done. There is no committee, no body of experts, no advisory board, absolutely nothing whatever in the way of supplementing what the single department of government charged with the administration of the affairs of labour has done up to the present time. It is a thousand pities, for more reasons than one, that such a course was not taken.

We are now coming into the third year that this government has been in office and attempting to deal with this problem. Out of the millions upon millions that have been spent what have we in the way of knowledge to guide us in future action? The public debt, by the vast increase in it, will show what has been spent; but what has the ministry in the way of acquired knowledge that will help it to meet the situation during the coming winter? If there had been a commission such as I have indicated, that body by this time would have been familiar with conditions and with the whole question from coast to coast. It would have known the agencies and individuals which could be trusted, and those which could not be trusted. It would have been in a position to advise the government and to carry on the work in an intelligent and effective manner. More than that, an organization of that type would have been in a position to advise a committee of parliament as to the adoption of measures which would be helpful in preventing any recurrence of aggravated unemployment. A national system of unemployment insurance is essential. Such a system can be brought about in Canada only by very careful study and understanding of the whole situation. What greater assistance could a government or parliament have than that which might be offered by a body of men and women who for a period of two, three or more years—or whatever the time may be—has been devoting special attention to