

Supply—Labour

if we did not have a deficit there would be very many more people out of work than there are.

Mr. Ricard: There are more people now than there were in Liberal times. You can deny that if you want to.

Mr. Browne (Vancouver-Kingsway): As I was saying, one of the things the hon. member for Essex East kept saying was that these people were drawing unemployment insurance benefits and I said that while we are faced with a serious problem of unemployment I at least am very thankful that people are helped to the extent that they are able to get unemployment insurance. The amendments that the present government has made to the act have made it much easier in many respects to get unemployment insurance benefits. Indeed, some \$60 million of the amount spent on unemployment insurance benefits last year was spent because of the fact the government made changes in the act so that more people would be covered by it and would be able to get benefits.

Now, as to some of the other measures that the government has taken which have helped create employment in the country, I have already mentioned housing and called to your attention what the position of the opposition was in respect of that. I want to go on to some other increases in spending that have taken place in government which have helped with this problem. One of the arguments that has been put forward by the labour congress has been that more money in the hands of the average people of the country helps a great deal to stimulate spending and to create business in that way. The social measures that this government have taken have put money into the hands of the people who are not able to save it. They spend it for day to day living and in that way the money goes directly into the stream of business in this country.

I believe this is one of the few times in the history of this country when we have come out of such a serious recession just by the policies of the government. We know that the Liberal government staggered along until 1939 without making any progress, and then got a war and took all the credit for that. I do not know whether they want to take the blame for the war at the same time. I would think it is just as reasonable to blame them for the war as it is to give them credit for the record level of employment we had during those years. Then, when the war was over they started downhill again until the Korean situation. When we look at this great record of the Liberals, about which we are always told, we find that wars came

along and stimulated business and they never brought us out of a recession by their policies alone, and certainly not as serious a one as we have had here.

I turn to the amounts that have been paid out, under what we may call social payments, by the present government. Direct payments to individuals by the dominion government on social account were \$1,500 million last year compared with \$1 billion in the last year under the Liberals. This was an increase of 50 per cent, and was made up in part as follows: Old age pensions have increased from \$379 million in 1956-57 to \$578 million, or by 53 per cent; old age assistance increased from \$20 million to \$32 million, or by 60 per cent; blind pension payments increased from \$3 million to \$4.5 million or by 50 per cent; disabled pensions from \$7 million to \$18 million or by 150 per cent; unemployment assistance—I might point out that this is different from unemployment insurance—from \$4 million to \$24 million or by 500 per cent. As I had previously pointed out, the increased expenditure under unemployment insurance, which was the direct result of what we did to extend seasonal benefits over additional months and cover workers not previously eligible for benefit, amounted to \$60 million. Then, of course, because of new families, the family allowance has increased by almost \$100 million in the past three years.

As I pointed out previously—

Mr. Tardif: Would the hon. member permit a question? The hon. member has made quite a history of the past 10 years—

Some hon. Members: Question, question.

Mr. Tardif: Then, I want to say that it was—

Some hon. Members: Question, question.

Mr. Tardif: The question is, now that the past history has been given to this house, what does the hon. gentleman propose to do to help the 800,000 unemployed that exist in Canada today?

Mr. Ricard: Where have you been?

Mr. Browne (Vancouver-Kingsway): As I was pointing out, I am saying that I am supporting these measures that the government is taking now. I feel that they are not inconsiderable. I have said if there are any further suggestions the opposition have, they should bring them forward. In other words, if they are sincerely interested in this question of unemployment they should not be continually getting up and complaining without making a suggestion which is going to put somebody to work, and that is exactly what they have been doing.