

The Budget—Mr. Drew

record. The conference adjourned with a statement on behalf of the dominion government that they were going to be considered, and we never met again, only because the dominion government was not prepared to call a conference, although it was requested over and over again by myself as premier of Ontario and by other premiers right across Canada.

This is something that every member should be prepared to examine objectively. We have another conference under way. Members of parliament are those who must accept responsibility for their willingness, if they indicate that willingness, to let this government leave the whole thing in the position where their attitude is described by words used earlier this afternoon, "take your choice, George." No; surely hon. members opposite, who must claim some success out of this beautifully published book, are the very ones who have the highest degree of obligation to see that these undertakings are planned, and that we do know where we stand. After all, we very frankly indicated doubt that the government had any intention of carrying it out, and we were certainly right on that occasion. We are not dealing with mere questions of agreement or disagreement, we are dealing with the human problem of hundreds of thousands of unemployed people who today are desperately anxious about the future. We are dealing with the problem of what answer is going to be given by the husband who comes home to his family and is asked, "Have you got work?" We are dealing with the problem of the housewife who wants to know where the money for the next meal is coming from. We are dealing with the deepest and most fundamental problem of all, the maintenance of the households of the people of Canada.

It is this human problem which is incorporated in this situation because we have been told by this government through the Prime Minister that the proposals they put forward should not be called proposals because they were not definite enough and in any event that they have not the facts on which to proceed. Let us have the facts. We have been in the position where we have two sets of figures in regard to the unemployed. We have a set of figures given on March 17 in regard to applicants for employment showing a total of 632,913. Those were the figures given to us by an agency of government. Then we are told that those are not the right figures, that the other figure is just over 400,000. If they are over 400,000 they are far too high. Which figure is correct?

In any event the government does not know. The government has not the facts and there

[Mr. Drew.]

are a lot of facts to find out. How is this divided as between married and unmarried people? How is it divided as between the young and the old? How is it divided as between husbands and wives where both are employed? Those are all factors in a problem of this kind. They are all factors in regard to which every single detail should have been obtained long ago by this government under the pressure which has been exerted in this house.

The Prime Minister blandly told us the other day that it was perhaps a good thing that there had not been agreement, that they may have been too optimistic in those 1945 proposals. That is poor solace to the unemployed who have been hoping that out of these meetings would come something to meet their situation. We should have known that long ago if the government thought this had been a fortuitous breakdown, with the resultant refusal to call another conference. Perhaps that was the reason they did not call another conference. I wonder. The Prime Minister now says that it was fortunate they did not reach agreement. Perhaps they made sure that they never reached agreement and that is the reason we were not called back. It is the first reasonable explanation I have heard on the part of this government in this respect.

Then the Prime Minister speaks about the heavy burden of war, or perhaps I should correct that and say heavy expenditure for defence preparations.

An hon. Member: The cold war.

Mr. Drew: I hope no hon. member opposite will object—someone just now objected to the use of the word "war", but to the young men who fought in Korea it was a very real war, whether a hot war or a cold war. The Prime Minister very properly pointed out that large expenditures are being made for defence. That is true, but let us look at the situation as it is.

In 1944, which was the base year upon which these proposals were made, the gross national product was \$11,954 million. In 1954, which is the base year upon which the present proposals were based—I should not use the word "proposals" because there were not enough facts to justify that name, according to the government—the gross national product had more than doubled to a total of \$23,985 million. If the gross national product is twice as much, why cannot they deal with these proposals on the basis they put forward? How much further do they need to go?

In 1939 the percentage of the tax dollar which the dominion government took was