

Proposed Committee on Unemployment

the demand is good. The price should be more than fair. If these men could be put in the position where they could repair their structures or buy the necessary engines and other equipment they could carry on this year and would once more be established in this industry, and would face a much brighter future.

Whatever assistance is given will have to be provided within a few weeks, or the materials that would permit them to carry on this year will not be available. I brought this matter to the attention of the government on one previous occasion since we met last November, and again I want to suggest that some way must be found. It is most necessary that this particular branch of the fishing industry, this particular group of primary producers, must be in position where they can carry on with their work, the only work they know anything about. Because of the lack of equipment which I have mentioned, these men may lose a very good season this year.

In the nine years that I have been in this House of Commons I have noticed that it has always been possible to find some way to provide assistance for other primary producers. I am not speaking in a critical sense, but I remember a couple of years ago listening to a debate in this house which went on for three or four days in connection with the wheat producers of western Canada whose wheat was out under the snow. I have every sympathy in the world for those primary producers. We listened to their story for some three or four days and it was decided that assistance must be provided. If I remember correctly an amount of \$20 million was voted by the government to take care of that situation. When seeding time came the following spring it was found that only \$700,000 of that enormous amount had been taken up. In other words someone had been crying before he was hurt.

There have been other cases I could refer to, and again I am not speaking in a critical way. There was the time when \$65 million or more was given to the western farmers. I stood in my place and voted for that because I am one who believes that all primary producers should be placed in the same category. We cannot make fish of one and fowl of another. I believe that the primary producers to whom I have referred today have every right to expect not gifts but financial assistance in the way of loans from this government. As I said previously, they are not the type who ask for a handout. They are the type of individuals who pay their bills and, with a little assistance at this critical time, they will be able to carry on

[Mr. Stuart (Charlotte).]

this year. I only hope it will be the type of season I feel it will, because if it is I believe it will enable these individuals to get back on their feet once more, pay their bills, and look the whole world in the face.

I have letters daily from good friends of mine who are not complaining too much, though I feel they have every right to complain. They are not suggesting to me that these services which have been provided for others should also be provided for them. I know these services have been provided for others. I have supported them in every case and I am prepared to support them again because, in my humble opinion, the economy of our whole country is in the hands of those primary producers. There are only three places from which you can get wealth. You have got to dig it out of the sea, the land, or the forest and it is those men who dig that wealth out of the land, sea, and forest who are responsible for the standard of living we enjoy in this country of ours. I feel they are the type of people who should have first consideration.

In this debate thus far I have not heard them mentioned by any hon. member. That may simply be neglect on the part of some hon. members who have spoken. Perhaps they do not realize the conditions under which some of our primary producers live. I do, and I feel they must be assisted; and as long as I represent that particular group I am going to continue to emphasize in every possible way the importance of this group to the economy of our country and to the Atlantic provinces, because that old-established industry means much to those provinces.

We were very much encouraged by a recent statement made by the Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Howe) to the effect that once more we may be able to get our share of the West Indies trade, which has always meant so much to the maritime provinces. But before I leave this particular subject I want to emphasize once more the necessity at the present time of providing assistance for this particular group of men. I am referring not to one particular branch of this industry but to the entire industry in the Atlantic provinces. I do not know much about conditions on the Pacific coast, but I do know these men must be given some financial assistance.

This is what I would recommend be done. I see no reason why small loans through our local banks, guaranteed by this government, would not solve the problem. I believe that is the manner in which it could be solved in a very short time. But there should be very little delay. The loans could be small, because