

Mr. GORDON GRAYDON (Peel): Mr. Chairman, in rising to take part in this debate relative to unemployment and agricultural distress, I do so with a full recognition of the problems that are involved in these two questions, which make us realize that they are of transcendent importance to the people of Canada as a whole. I believe the vast majority of the people of Canada are of the opinion that the problems of agricultural distress and unemployment, touching as they do the very roots of agriculture and industry, should receive prior consideration over any other problems with which the house is called upon to deal. Nothing short of a deliberate plan, a sustained attempt and concerted action on the part not only of governments, but also of the Canadian people cooperating with governments, will make any effective headway in a solution of these problems with which we are faced.

Members of this committee will recall being in the house in 1936 when the national employment commission was launched into action. Whatever may have been the motivating influences so far as the government was concerned, there was the transfer of this responsibility from the shoulders of the government to the shoulders of the commission it appointed. Whether it may have been an advisory commission or whether it may have had some administrative powers as well, the public, rightly or wrongly, gained the impression and had the belief that in the setting up of this commission there lay some hope of the unemployment problem being solved through its efforts and that of the government itself. They felt that ways and means might be found through the work of the commission for curing the cancer which had grown up in our body economic and in our body politic.

As a new member of this house I was greatly impressed with the possibilities of the commission when it was first appointed. I, along with other members on the opposition side of the house, was willing to give the commission a fair chance; but we all realized this, that in any cooperative effort the responsibility actually lay upon the shoulders of the government itself, and, Mr. Chairman, it must still lie there.

Statistics, of course, form a valuable foundation from which the problem may be attacked, but statistics themselves will not solve the problem. The problem cannot be solved on any such narrow ground as that, and we are still awaiting satisfactory results from the appointment of this commission by the government.

[Mr. Deachman.]

The speech of the Minister of Labour (Mr. Rogers), eloquent and well delivered as it was, and most interesting so far as its facts were concerned, should have been in my opinion the cornerstone upon which this nation through the government might have built its unemployment and agricultural distress policy. But I must admit, with all due regard for the Minister of Labour himself, that I was not able to find in it in any plain terms a governmental policy which would be worth while in solving either of these two problems which we have in our midst, and I think everyone found it impossible to find in the detailed account of his speech in Hansard any real solution or any real policy which would go far to remedying our agricultural distress and our unemployment problems.

May I say that it was not very encouraging to me or to the people of Canada, I believe, to hear the Minister of Labour say that, after all, unemployment insurance and the other social legislation which we have been expecting for some considerable time since this government took office would have to wait until such time as the commission on dominion-provincial relations would report to the house. In sporting circles they call that sort of thing shadow boxing, and for want of a better term I am going to apply that description to the minister's efforts with respect to the matters he dealt with in his address.

There is seldom any real reason for the appointment of the commissions we have had since I came into the house. We are sent down here by the people as their representatives, some of us to govern the country, and some to assist in that government by way of criticism and other activities. But, in addition to being sent down here, we are paid by the people to do that job. If that job is too big for the government and the elected representatives of the people of this dominion, then it is our bounden duty to see to it that the people know it, and know it soon, because we have no right to expect them to pay twice for the government they are sending us down here to give.

I pay this compliment to the Minister of Labour and the government and the members of the House of Commons, that I believe there are just as good brains and just as great a capacity and intelligence in this house as on any of the commissions which so far I have seen appointed in Canada. The commission form of government is, in my opinion, open to two or three grave objections. One objection I should like to note is that the commission is too far removed from the people themselves. The second is that there is the