

*Unemployment*

is of serious proportions. I say this particularly in the light of what we have seen and what we have not seen on the part of the government.

When we entered this debate several weeks ago I am sure that all hon. members expected that the government would avail itself of this opportunity to make an announcement of whatever policy it proposed in order to grapple with a situation which is assuming emergent proportions. They have had ample opportunity. Two senior members of the government spoke on the first day of the debate. We have our opportunity as members of this house to gauge the government's competence to meet problems by what we heard from those two ministers and what we have not heard from the rest of the government.

Certain facts have emerged from this debate. They are now crystal clear. First, widespread unemployment is a stark, ugly fact in Canada today. The figure of 600,000 persons in search of employment has been used in this debate without challenge on the part of the government. This session opened two and a half months ago with a statement by the government contained in the speech from the throne as follows:

Some unemployment of a regional and seasonal nature is being experienced.

In the face of what the government must know now, if indeed they did not know it then, in the face of what every hon. member of this house well knows regardless of the nature of his constituency, that statement in the speech from the throne was a palpable and grotesque absurdity of understatement.

The second fact is that people in this country are suffering when there are evidences of prosperity, when many people are enjoying the largest incomes ever in their experience. While the national income is not as high as it was last year, nevertheless it remains at a high level. In the face of those facts we still have people in Canada suffering as a result of unemployment.

There are people in Canada today who are going hungry as a result of unemployment. There are ruptures in family life that are occurring day by day as a result of unemployment. In the great urban centres where unemployment is acute it is the experience of all those connected with welfare, church or philanthropic work in any capacity, or of those who hold positions of public responsibility, that men are deserting their families deliberately because that is the only way in which their families can qualify for relief assistance.

The third fact is that these large numbers who are out of employment today want work. I have had occasion in recent weeks

to talk to a number of leading figures in welfare organizations in Toronto, where we have over 50,000 unemployed, and every one tells me that people who are out of work want work. They do not want handouts; they do not want cash given to them; they want work. It is a great tribute to the fibre of our Canadian people, the fibre of those who have suffered the cruel consequences of unemployment, that what they are asking for and what they want is not a dole, not a handout, but work.

The fourth fact is that Canadian resources are ample. The Canadian future is bright with promise. We have not too many people in Canada. We would make no contribution to the unemployment problem if we had fewer people in Canada today. In the midst of abundance, in the midst of surpluses, in the midst of evidences of prosperity this ugly fact of unemployment continues.

The fifth fact is that this is a special Canadian problem. The unemployment which Canada faces today and which is of large and serious proportions is quite unlike the days beginning with 1929. Those days were characterized by a world-wide depression and world-wide unemployment. The situation today is quite different. Other countries are not suffering unemployment; indeed, in many of them there is a shortage of labour, and yet Canada suffers from widespread unemployment.

We know that in the United Kingdom the number of unemployed is about one-third of the number of unemployed in Canada, even with a population three times the size of Canada's. We had a visit a few days ago from the great man who is Prime Minister of Australia, Mr. R. G. Menzies. It will be recalled that when he was in Ottawa he was asked about unemployment in Australia. Speaking of conditions in Australia, according to a press report of March 10, he stated that "it would be quite accurate to say that there are more jobs there than there are people".

So the situation that confronts Canada is not one that is paralleled in any other comparable country. The situation is quite unlike that of the days of the depression which began in 1929 when the tide of recession, the tide of unemployment, the tide of depression swept over the entire world. That tide engulfed countries regardless of their resources and regardless of their form of government; it engulfed them all.

Sixth, the government has made no proposals to meet the problem of unemployment. Sir, is it not a tragic fact that after five days of debate participated in by two senior members of the government and with opportunities