

Unemployment

conference is taking place in April, he will consider the suggestion I made earlier, namely that this opportunity be taken to discuss the unemployment situation and the manner in which the federal government and the provincial governments can best co-operate to meet those problems which are in their own fields.

And the Prime Minister replied:

Mr. Speaker, I should be greatly surprised if that question was not discussed while they are here.

Mr. Martin: Is that not what I said?

Mr. Argue: The record will speak for itself, that that is precisely and exactly what I said, when I was quoting the Prime Minister's remarks originally. And I would like to ask—I would challenge—the Minister of National Health and Welfare to tell parliament and the country what his government is prepared to do to solve the unemployment problem. And the unemployment problem is a pretty important thing in the minister's own city of Windsor. I am sure the constituents of the minister would like to know what plans the government has, if any. But all I can tell—

Mr. Martin: Would the hon. member permit a question?

Mr. Argue: All I can tell him—

Mr. Martin: Will my hon. friend permit me to ask a question, a very important question?

Mr. Argue: The answer is no. No, not at all. I know Mr. Speaker has a clock, and when 40 minutes have gone I will have to take my seat.

Mr. Martin: The record will show that you refused to face this problem, just as you have accused the government of refusing to face it.

Mr. Knowles: Let the minister make his own speech next.

Mr. Argue: There is a fine admission, when the minister admits that he himself will not face this problem.

Mr. Martin: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Argue: He makes these interjections, and that is all the statement the minister makes. And, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Martin: On a point of order. The Minister of National Health and Welfare—

Mr. Argue: No, no.

Mr. Martin: It is a point of order.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Martin: My hon. friend ought to have patience, and he should not get unduly excited.

Mr. Argue: Is that your point of order?

[Mr. Argue.]

Mr. Martin: I rise to say that the hon. member, when he said that we were not facing this question on this side of the house, and when he said he was quoting the words of the Prime Minister in support of that, was inaccurately quoting what the Prime Minister had said. Then he himself later correctly quoted what the Prime Minister had said, by referring to the willingness and the desire of the Prime Minister to face this important question. And I might tell my hon. friend—

Mr. Knowles: Now who is misinterpreting?

Mr. Martin: And I might tell my hon. friend that there is no one in this country who is more anxious to deal with this problem than the Prime Minister of Canada.

Mr. Stewart (Winnipeg North): Why doesn't he do it, then?

Mr. Argue: That is the contribution that the Minister of National Health and Welfare is prepared to make to solve the unemployment problem: Leave it to Uncle Louie; he is a great man, and somehow or another something will happen to take care of this situation.

I issue a challenge to the Minister of National Health and Welfare to take his place in this debate and tell the people of Windsor what he is prepared to do to help solve unemployment.

Mr. Martin: Will you be here when I speak?

Mr. Argue: But he prefers to rise and chisel in on my time. Let him speak. He can have his 40 minutes—and I think he will need all of them to explain why the government has not done something long ago to meet this very desperate problem. But instead of a minister of the government leading the fight to solve the problem of unemployment, they have retreated to the swamp of unemployment, with all the human misery and degradation that attaches to a situation when there are 600,000 unemployed.

And I would ask the Minister of National Health and Welfare whether he has read the contribution made by a gentleman by the name of Duncan K. MacTavish, O.B.E., Q.C., president of the national Liberal federation, yesterday in Ottawa, when he charged that opposition parties are conducting a deliberate campaign to undermine the economy of the country. I would like to know if the Minister of National Health and Welfare agrees with that statement, and with his—