

At the prorogation in May, 1932, there was this assertion:

My government's policy . . . has already achieved an amelioration of conditions and forecasts steady and continued improvement.

Then referring to the Imperial Economic Conference it is stated:

Canada believes that the closer economic association of the British Empire will herald the dawn of a new and greater era of prosperity both for ourselves and for all the nations of the earth.

Hon. members will recall that the session in 1932 was adjourned over Christmas and that parliament reassembled on January 30, 1933, but even away back in October, 1932, we were told in the speech from the throne:

There are at last definite signs that the acuteness of the depression is passing.

Then addressing hon. members of both houses His Excellency was asked to say:

I rejoice that the wisdom of your steadfast policy . . . is still more fully manifest with approaching prosperity.

"Approaching prosperity" in October, 1932! There was a reference again to the improved conditions, and then something in the nature of a peroration as follows:

. . . we will build a Canada greater than we have yet known.

Leaving aside the evident effect upon some hon. members opposite of the rhetorical language which I have just quoted, and coming down to what is set forth in the present speech from the throne as indices of improving conditions, we find this statement:

I congratulate you that such improved world conditions are reflected in Canada by expanding trade, improving revenues, increasing employment, and a more confident outlook upon the future. . . . The evidence of a return to permanent prosperity is most convincing—in certain countries.

When the speech refers to "permanent prosperity" and when it invites us to look at certain specific data for evidence of that prosperity, then it seems to me that we are obliged to consider absolute amounts over considerable periods, not merely as hon. gentlemen opposite have been doing, percentages of slight improvement which have arisen from the fact that while at the outset trade in some directions was practically obliterated by the passing of their legislation, it may have increased a little here and there as some of the barriers have been lowered, making a certain percentage of improvement inevitable.

Let me take first, the figures which have to do with the so-called "increasing employ-

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

ment." I want to say at once that it is an amazing fact that notwithstanding that these times are what they are, and that public money is being spent to the extent that it is for the relief of unemployment, it is impossible to get from any of the government departments reliable information, or indeed any information with regard to the extent of unemployment in Canada at the present time. For some reason best known to the ministry these facts are not being given to the public; they are not appearing in any government reports. The Department of Labour ought to have a record or a substantial record, but it apparently has nothing to give which will throw light on the extent of unemployment at the present time. I believe that is entirely wrong, and the only explanation I think there can be, is that the ministry does not wish the country to know how many unemployed there are.

I want to go a step further and say that a much more serious fact is the circumstance that in the government reports on employment the government is including with employment arising from private enterprise employment which grows out of unemployment relief. They are bulking the two together with the result that in their reports which are given to the public it appears that employment in Canada, as that phrase is understood, is greater than it has been in previous months, as if that were the evidence of some increased prosperity, whereas it is none other than evidence of increased unemployment relief which means increased taxation of the people of the country. Apart from this, however, the government's own figures do not give the evidence which will substantiate the statement made in the speech from the throne. "Increasing employment" is the phrase that is used in His Excellency's address. The Department of Trade and Commerce publishes an annual review of employment in Canada. The figures are given, first, upon the basis of index numbers, and, second, upon the basis of the number of persons actually employed. Whether there has been an increase in employment will be best seen when we make a comparison between employment as it was when the present administration took over office, and as it has been since they came into office. In giving the figures from the government's own records, I shall leave out the year 1930 because that was a year in which the members of one party held office part of the time, and hon. members opposite held office the other part of the time. The index figure for 1926 is