

*The Address—Mr. Drew*

work through the national employment service, February 2, 1950." There is not an hon. member in this house who is not fully aware of the fact that a large percentage of the unemployed do not seek work through the national employment services. It is well known that throughout the rural areas, and in many occupations, individuals seek employment on particular jobs. These figures are undoubtedly far below the real figures for unemployment at this time.

In considering the unemployment insurance figures as the basic factor in arriving at estimates of the unemployed, it is necessary also to remember that less than half of the employed in Canada are covered by unemployment insurance. Every social service worker, every welfare mission, knows that in addition to those receiving unemployment insurance there are many unemployed whose numbers are difficult to determine and whose plight is a cause for grave concern to this house.

The situation is serious. It is not too much to describe it as critical, because of the rapid acceleration of the unemployment figures in so short a time. It is to be hoped that this house will receive detailed information today from the Prime Minister as to the steps which will be taken to meet a situation of which the government has certainly been aware for many months.

The problem itself is serious and urgent. But what is of special importance to the members of this house is the fact that any indication of the real situation was withheld from hon. members, and is in fact not disclosed in the speech from the throne which we are now asked to approve. The statement of one of the senior members of the government only three weeks ago, that the unemployment situation in Canada is purely seasonal, simply emphasizes the fact that members of parliament have the responsibility not only to deal with unemployment itself but also to consider the action of the government in relation to parliament, and its effect upon our parliamentary system.

The fact is that unemployment is considerably above the figures given by the government, and is steadily rising, for reasons which the government refused to admit to this house during the last session.

The serious threat to our farmers, both in the loss of markets and in the severe drop in prices, is also something that has happened in the two months since the end of the last session. We received no indication of any condition such as that which has now become apparent, although the government has been repeatedly warned of the danger and measures were urged to meet the situation.

[Mr. Drew.]

Our forest industries, particularly those engaged in overseas export business, are already severely hit. So also are the mining industry and the fishing industry, particularly in the new province of Newfoundland. Where is there any indication of this situation in the speech from the throne and when has the government given us any indication of its knowledge of what was coming?

The fact is that this speech from the throne, which after all is simply a statement put in the mouth of the king's representative by the government, is a statement of propaganda about the excellent things this government has done. In the face of conditions which are disturbing Canadians from coast to coast, there is nothing but a suave assurance of everything being perfectly satisfactory. There is this unemployment, which the figures of the Department of Labour made so clear on Saturday—not so much in their present total, but in their acceleration within the past few weeks. Yet what do we find in the speech from the throne to suggest any action by the government to meet that situation? There is the promise that the provisions for unemployment insurance will be extended. Certainly they will need to be, unless the government recognizes that the people of this country desire unemployment insurance when it is necessary, but want the chance to work, and want the necessary measures taken right away that will provide work.

It will be recalled that a motion was presented to this house calling upon the government to take steps to restore and expand our overseas trade. It was pointed out then that employment and the prices of our products depended upon the maintenance of that trade in a country where three out of every eight workers depended upon export trade for their daily jobs. The government not only failed to meet this situation; it refused to act when the danger was clearly forecast by members of this house.

The loss of export business, particularly to overseas markets, is the cause of the very real difficulties with which we are now confronted. Here again we have a record of suppression of information which is a direct and continuing challenge to the supreme authority of parliament. As long ago as April 25 of last year the Canadian Exporters Association, which is made up of men whose business is the export of goods, in a statement presented to the Minister of Trade and Commerce, expressed the combined judgment of those who know what is taking place. I should like to quote from that presentation of April 25 last, in order to show how clearly those who are in this business were warning