

Mr. LEMIEUX: He said that last summer. I have not the date, but I remember taking notice of the statement when it was published. I quite agree with the right hon. gentleman that with the war industries that have sprung up the question of unemployment is perhaps less acute to-day than it was a year ago, but the object of my motion is to meet the very situation which will be raised when the war will be ended, when those temporary industries will be dislocated and thousands and thousands of workers will be thrown on the labour market without any employment.

Sir ROBERT BORDEN: Of course, I do not profess to know the conditions absolutely throughout Canada, but I am sure that during the past four or perhaps five months the representations which have been made to the Government have been with regard to scarcity of labour and not with regard to unemployment.

Mr. LEMIEUX: They may be as regards scarcity of labour for these special war industries, but at all events I do not fully disagree with the right hon. gentleman. I say that the war industries have perhaps settled for the time being the question of unemployment, although there are many hundreds unemployed to be seen in the large centres of Canada to-day. But my motion has for its essential object to bring to the attention of the House and the country the urgency of establishing a clearing house for the labour market, not for to-day but for to-morrow, when this war will be ended, when the war industries will be dislocated, when the soldiers by hundreds of thousands will be returning from the front, and when the vast flow of immigration will be setting in to the prairies of the West. In that regard Canada is sadly behind other countries just as the United States, admittedly, from what I read a moment ago, is also behind other countries. Why, even such a country as Spain has a clearing house for labour, and we must not forget that in Canada the condition of unemployment, the condition of the ordinary labourer, whether he is a skilled or an unskilled labourer, is probably more difficult than in other countries, because of the distance between the important centres. Therefore, Sir, a central labour exchange is necessary to bring the unemployed in contact with the employers. For that purpose I believe that a permanent central organization is needed. It is a delusion, I believe, to suppose that all unemployment

will disappear with the return of what we call prosperity or prosperous times. For these reasons: First, in normal times the labour market is being continuously disorganized through the lack of a national policy with regard to immigration. Second, the workers are kept in ignorance of work opportunities at points distant from their places of abode, due to the lack of an adequate system of intelligence regarding employment opportunities throughout their immediate localities and in more remote parts of the country. Third, the labour market is still regarded as an inexhaustible reservoir to be treated much as we have treated traditionally other great national resources. Isolated seasonal trades, lack of training in industrial and manual activities, lack of vocational guidance, and incomplete provision of employment bureaus are some of the continuing causes of unemployment which it is possible to remedy, and which prosperity waves do not obliterate.

A moment ago I was speaking with regard to the unemployed in our large centres. Will you allow me, Mr. Speaker, to draw your attention to the following words which I find in part 1 of the report of the Ontario Commission on Unemployment? I believe that Canada is probably to-day the most favoured farming country in the world; she should attract large numbers of farmers; her destiny is eminently that of a great agricultural country. Yet for the last twenty years or so the urban population has increased at an enormous rate, and has become really a danger to Canada. At page 22, part 1, of the report of the Ontario Commission of Unemployment—

Mr. J. D. REID: What is the date of that report?

Mr. LEMIEUX: It has just been published, in 1916. I received it a week ago. This report states:

The increase in the urban population is, indeed, one of the most striking facts involved by the census of 1911. Whilst during the decade 1901 to 1911, the rural population increased by 576,163 or 17·20 per cent, the increase in the urban population was 1,258,165, or at the rate of 62·28 per cent. In the Maritime Provinces and in Ontario, the urban population increased at the expense of the rural, for the latter has actually declined since 1901.

Now let us take the census returns of Canadian population. In 1881 there was an increase of 86 per cent in the rural population, and of 14 per cent urban; in 1891 an increase of 69 per cent rural, and of