

Proposed Committee on Unemployment

contractors who are engaged in the construction of houses and outside work, there is some unemployment.

However, I have noticed that we in Fort William have some men who are engaged in seasonal work and who are never unemployed because they have initiative and, like some hon. members, they would not be out of work; if they became unemployed in one job, they would get another. I know that in Fort William we have some unemployment at the present time. But from the report I received on Friday from a young businessman who visited me, the unemployment situation there is not serious. In fact, according to his report employment is on the up trend. While Canadian Car laid off a considerable group of men a while ago, they have taken them back again. That is a sign in the other direction.

I have a friend who is a building inspector. He says the best source of employment is the building trades because there are so many industries connected with them. As the Minister of Labour (Mr. Gregg) has said, the construction of houses will be on the increase. Therefore employment from that source should be on the increase. I expect that in Fort William by the end of March there will be less unemployment; and by June I doubt that we shall have anybody unemployed there.

I appreciate the statement made by the Minister of Trade and Commerce. He did not mention Fort William, but I mention Port Arthur. We are very much alike. As far as we are concerned, it is seasonal unemployment. I should like to see any government on earth that can change the seasons and bring about all year round work. I have known of only one case where the sun was caused to stand still. That was in the case of Joshua. As long as we have lake Superior and the lakehead, we are going to have seasonal unemployment. Any government that can cure that situation is, in my opinion, certainly a sweet government. We shall continue to have seasonal unemployment. There are, however, certain men who, as I have said, when they lose one job and become unemployed, go and get another one. If they do not earn as big pay, they earn enough to keep the pot boiling.

I appreciate the work our trades and labour council in Fort William are doing. They are second to none in helping the men to get jobs.

Mr. H. O. White (Middlesex East): Mr. Speaker, I suppose there is no other problem in Canada that affects as many people as this question of unemployment. Because of the

[Mr. McIvor.]

far-reaching consequences I felt that I should take part in this debate, because quite a large percentage of the people whom I have the honour to represent are working people in the London area.

The first indication we had of the approaching problem—and it was pointed out by our party quite some time ago—was the loss of the primary markets for agricultural products. We are now reaping some of the results of those lost markets; and, on top of that, we are piling up surpluses of many farm products. Just while I am mentioning that fact, may I say that I hold in my hand an editorial from tonight's *Ottawa Journal*. I am going to ask the house to bear with me while I read a couple of paragraphs from it. It is entitled "Skeletons of the Farm" and reads in part as follows:

The Hamilton convention of the Ontario federation of labour, CIO-CCL, heard Mr. Douglas McEntee of the united automobile workers explain that a reduction in implement sales was due to farmers being unable to buy because of a 22 per cent drop in their own income in the last fifteen months. Thus there is evidence that labour leaders are taking a more realistic approach in examining the causes of unemployment.

Further on there is the following:

In 1953 the average weekly earnings of Canadian workers in manufacturing rose by 4 per cent in real income, but the farmer in many cases had no income gain for the year and in several instances he had less.

That indicates pretty clearly why farm implement manufacturers are not able to sell their products, and why the employees are finding themselves idle. Another indication of the trend of events is the report of the Bank of Canada mentioned by the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra, and I couple with that the annual statements of the chartered banks. I have examined them carefully. I think without exception they approach this problem cautiously, but they indicate that the loss of markets cannot help but have one result, a decrease in employment in Canada. Our banks are fairly conservative in their outlook, and I think they have soft-pedalled this question. Because of the danger that the impression might be created in the minds of many people that times are tougher than they actually are, they have approached the question with some caution. After all, markets are the keys to employment. We have lost markets and consequently we have lost the keys to employment.

There is another cause which I have mentioned before, inflation, which was aided and abetted through all the years from the beginning of the war until the last year or two. Inflation has resulted in our pricing ourselves