

*The Address—Mr. A. Brassard*

the government simply tell us the plain truth about it? They do not specify why they do not intend to call a meeting of representatives of the provinces in Ottawa this year. And if the Prime Minister intends to call such a meeting, being so jealous personally of the prerogatives and rights of parliament in every field, why does he not say so? It is a fact that the Prime Minister, with his strong voice, his gestures and his personality, has convinced the Canadian people that the Liberal government had not done justice to the opposition when the Conservatives were sitting on this side. Why does the Conservative government not give the example today by saying why it has no intention of asking provincial governments to examine our problems? He could also call a conference to look into the matter of unemployment. I do not wish to play politics with unemployment. Too many members in this house use this calamity to play politics.

Mr. Speaker, I hear our hon. opponents applaud my statement that too many members in the house try to play politics with unemployment. I believe—and you can applaud again—I believe that we should consider the question of unemployment from a human point of view and try to find a solution.

I listened very carefully to the hon. Minister of Labour (Mr. Starr) when he spoke today. He is a man I admire and for whom I have great regard. He tries to consider the problem and find a solution, but at the same time he blames the opposition for not offering any suggestion. But, is the Conservative cabinet made up of a group of ministers who work only on suggestions from the opposition? They are there precisely to work and to find solutions. The Diefenbaker cabinet is responsible for the administration of our country's affairs. They are the ones who went to the people and said: "We have problems in this country; you elect us and we shall solve them". Once in office, the Conservatives want the opposition to find every solution for them. To be honest I must say that the Minister of Labour and a few of his colleagues did try in vain to find solutions, but they did not solve the problem. Unemployment is still here and I believe we should find a solution to the unemployment situation in Canada. There is such a thing as the dominion bureau of statistics, the D.B.S. There is a big difference between figures released by the D.B.S. and those provided by employment offices throughout the country. I know from experience—I have never been Minister of Labour and I shall never be,

[Mr. Brassard (Lapointe).]

thank heaven for our people—but I know from experience that the Minister of Labour is in possession of statistics which are much higher than those given by the dominion bureau of statistics. I was a civil servant before becoming a lowly member of parliament, and I know that those statistics are much more alarming than those published by the dominion bureau of statistics. I shall not quote any figure, though the figure is known to me. But when one looks at the number of persons without jobs or looking for one throughout the country, it is something appalling, something pitiful. There are not only people seeking jobs, not only thousands of people receiving unemployment insurance benefits, not to mention the few thousands who are not even receiving such benefits, but there are all those who are depending on their father or mother, and who are receiving absolutely nothing. At this stage, I might as well add a word about my constituency. The Aluminum Company of Canada, whose main plant is in Arvida, has twice reduced its working staff by 10 per cent. There are also, in my constituency, two mills operated by Price Brothers. They have now reduced the work week to between 24 and 32 hours.

Those are the only two basic industries in the constituency of Lapointe. We have lost part of the British market and part of the French market for aluminum. England, which I deeply respect as a country, is the mother country of a great number of my fellow-citizens as France is the mother country of a great number of my fellow-citizens too. England is part of the commonwealth, but it buys part of its aluminum from Russia, which doubtlessly is also part of the commonwealth of nations. I find this situation painful. I am all for helping our two mother countries, France and England. We are making sacrifices to help other nations in many fields, and I would mention NATO as only one example. But why, when the time comes to reciprocate, why is no consideration given to the sacrifices we have made?

Mr. Speaker, having been myself a civil servant under the former Liberal administration—it is perhaps for that reason that we were defeated—I am fully aware of the sacrifices that Canada has made for England and France. As I said a moment ago, these two countries are our mother countries, and I know that we must help them. But why do they not take into account what we have done for them? If cuts in personnel had to be made in the Arvida aluminum company, I think it is due to the fact that we have lost a great part of our external trade with the English and the French.