

Whenever figures are quoted with regard to unemployment some other figures are always brought forward by way of contradiction. Someone suggests there are more people working today than there were last year, or somebody else submits that more people are included in the unemployment figures than are actually out of work. I do not want to get into a discussion as to whether there are more or fewer people unemployed today than at some other time. What does concern us all is that there are at least 440,000 able-bodied men and women out of employment. That figure suggests to me that the finding of work for these hundreds of thousands of men and women remains one of Canada's top problems, and one for whose solution I can assure the Government it can count on the help of all members on this side of the house.

The question does arise, and I think we should consider it: why do we in this prosperous land find ourselves with so many people unemployed? There are many reasons, but in my opinion one of the fundamental causes is a result of the Government's trade policies.

Hon. Mr. Horner: Unemployment insurance is the main cause.

Hon. Mr. Macdonald: I am not going to argue that with my honourable friend from Blaine Lake (Hon. Mr. Horner). I am not analysing all the causes, but I repeat that one of the fundamental causes is a result of the present trade policies of the Government. These policies, instead of bringing about an increase in our overall trade, have contributed to the bringing about of a reduction in that trade. The high standard of living to which this country has attained is due in no small measure to its overall trade; that is, to the grand total of our combined imports and exports. Whenever that trade is disrupted on a large scale it results in most serious and often disastrous consequences within our country. I think you will all agree with me that we must maintain a high level of foreign trade, that is of our exports and imports. A reduction in one without a corresponding increase in the other results in a slackening of our economy.

During the eleven-month period ending in November our imports decreased by 9 per cent to \$4,769,500,000 from \$5,230,800,000. During the same period our exports remained practically unchanged from \$4,481,200,000 to \$4,480,200,000. This reduction in our imports with no corresponding increase in our exports is a direct reflection of the slowing down in business. Honourable senators will recall that the Prime Minister suggested we should reduce our imports from the United States by 15 per cent and increase our exports by

commonwealth countries by a similar amount. Well, we have decreased to a considerable extent our imports from the United States, but at the same time our total imports from the commonwealth countries also decreased. It is obvious and unnecessary for me to repeat, but I do so for emphasis only, that a decrease in our imports with no corresponding increase in our exports results in a reduction in our overall trade and, because of our expanding population, which this year has increased from 16,887,000 to 17,275,000, is bound to bring about a condition of unemployment in our country.

Now, what effort has the Government made to develop Canada's trade? I do not think I am being unfair when I say that the Government has brought down no legislation whatsoever which would be beneficial to the development of world trade and thereby to the creation of jobs for our unemployed. During the election the Prime Minister promised—and thereby gained many votes which elected many candidates—to do something to help the ailing textile and woollen goods industries. The Government has been in power for a year and a half and nothing beneficial has been done. It has brought in two restrictive trade measures, neither of which has put one man into employment in the woollen goods and textile trades. During the eighteen months that the Government has been in power the number employed by textile and woollen mills has decreased rather than increased. During this period mills which prospered under the former administration have had to close their doors, either to give up business permanently or to move to other parts of the world. Workers in those mills voted for the present administration on the promise that legislation would be passed which would prevent such an event from taking place. It is obvious that restrictive trade measures will not restore jobs to these unemployed workers, and they are looking to the Government to declare just what it proposes to do by way of legislation to enable it to keep its promise with woollen and textile workers.

It may be said for the Government that it was instrumental in calling a conference in the early part of this month between cabinet ministers from Canada and from the United States to discuss trade between the two countries. This conference must have been a great disappointment to the Canadian ministers. Cabinet ministers from the two countries talked with one another at official meetings for nine hours, and it is interesting to note that they then spent three hours haggling over the wording of the report. Well, I can quite understand that, because nothing was decided; everything was left for a future conference. The report itself tells