

*The Budget—Mr. Kuhl*

We have not depression; we are in an oppression. The so-called depressions we have had were not depressions. The only depressions we have experienced are those in which providence has failed to bestow its blessings on this earth, and there have been very few years since this country was settled when we have had a depression.

Mr. WILTON: Do not blame providence.

Mr. KUHLE: We certainly do not blame providence. What we have been suffering from is an oppression by the bankers. What we call a depression is man-made, and it lies within the power of man to help himself out of this so-called depression, which is actually oppression.

We have had a great deal of discussion on motions and resolutions seeking to provide employment for the unemployed. In this day and age I think we should be more careful with respect to the terms we use. There are several ways by which the term "work" may be explained. I agree with all attempts by the government and others to provide necessary public works. I believe that necessary work is necessary, but I disagree entirely with the idea of deliberately trying to provide work. We have to settle in our minds, first of all, when we talk about work, what is the object of our economic system. Is it to provide work or is it to provide goods and services? I believe that the object of an economic system is to provide goods and services irrespective of whether or not it takes work through human hands. I believe, if we get down to fundamentals and agree on them, we can make some progress, but so long as we maintain that the object of an economic system is to provide work we shall not get anywhere. The unemployment situation is not a sign of decay; it is a sign of progress. We should be using the machine wherever possible. If the object of an economic system is the provision of work, it would be very simple to provide it. Why not put all the unemployed on the highways with teaspoons and table-knives? You could put the unemployed to work in that way. The purpose of an economic system is to provide goods and services and not work, and when you introduce the necessity of work into an economic system you are introducing something that is purely extraneous.

We must also distinguish between voluntary work and involuntary work. It is necessary for man to do voluntary work if he is going to obtain the most out of life. There are two kinds of involuntary work, or forced labour: that forced by man, and that forced

[Mr. Kuhl.]

by nature. That forced by nature is dignified and is necessary; that forced by man is unnecessary and servile. Man has been endeavouring to free himself from both kinds of forced labour ever since the history of man began. He has achieved to an outstanding degree freedom from nature's forced labour, but he still has to obtain freedom from man's forced labour.

The only method by which we can to-day distribute the goods which are produced and are upon the shelves, and for which there is no purchasing power in existence, is by placing purchasing power right in the hands of the consumers. There is absolutely no other way. The facts have been presented again and again to show that it is absolutely impossible with existing incomes to distribute the goods that can be both actually and potentially produced. I had intended to deal in some detail with the question of consumer purchasing power, but the time has gone by and I trust I shall have another opportunity to do so.

In conclusion, I should like to give two quotations to refute the argument that dividends would tend to demoralize people. But first let me say that so far as demoralization through the dividend is concerned, I do not think that is a matter with which the government should concern itself. A government should see that all goods which are produced are distributed. When it comes to demoralization as a result of consumer purchasing power, the government is stepping outside of its realm in dealing with that. That is a matter for the church and the school to deal with. Nevertheless I would like to place on Hansard two quotations to show that a dividend or consumer purchasing power or leisure does not tend to demoralize people.

During the boom period which came soon after the end of the war, the international labour office issued a questionnaire on the subject of the use of leisure by those whose shortened hours had made the question a live one, and in the following year, 1924, they reported on the replies, as follows:

It has been ascertained that excessive drinking has become less frequent in those centres in which the working day has been shortened. Excessive drinking is frequently the result of overwork, since the workman, tired by the continuous effort required by long working hours, is tempted to seek relaxation by going from the workshop to the public house. It is clearly shown by the general tenor of the evidence given and the declarations made by representatives of employers' and workers' organizations, by secretaries of provincial councils, by industrial employers, etcetera, that not only has the new system failed to produce any increase in intemperance, but that, on the