

*War Appropriation—Mr. MacInnis*

I should like to draw attention to one other point which was impressed upon me by the action taken a week or so ago by the Department of Labour when they gave out the information that this government would no longer assume its share of unemployment relief. I shall not say anything further about this, but I think it is absolutely necessary in a time of war that the social services of the country should be maintained. Personally I think it is necessary psychologically for the winning of the war. Speaking over the radio, I think it was last Sunday evening, Ernest Bevin said that it would be almost impossible for the people of Great Britain to carry on were it not for the social services which had been created and developed during the years.

There are certain people with a very low standard of living—people who are least able to help themselves—such as old people who are living on pensions. Their pittance is worth even less than it was, due to the rise in the cost of living. We guarantee the manufacturer a certain return upon his capital; after some agitation the industrial worker has had it recognized that his wages should bear some relation to the cost of living, and I suggest to the government that it should show its humanitarianism and concern for the welfare of the people by making similar adjustments in old age pensions. I was struck by a statement made on December 29, 1940, by the greatest American, I think, of all times, President Roosevelt. He said:

I would ask no one to defend a democracy which in turn would not defend everyone in the nation against want and privation. The strength of this nation shall not be diluted by the failure of the government to protect the economic well-being of its citizens.

I think the government of Canada should say the same. We have the resources; and even though we are at war, if those resources are properly organized, if the necessary production is carried on to supply the needs of the people without the restrictions imposed by the profit motive, everyone can have a reasonable and even a decent standard of living in the normal essentials of life. If I understand correctly what the people have in mind, they believe that we are fighting this war not only to defeat Hitlerism, but to destroy forever the social and economic system which creates Hitlers. If we want the whole-hearted support of the Canadian people in this struggle, we must give them some earnest manifestation of our determination to do that very thing.

I was interested, as were probably many other hon. members, in hearing Sir Norman Angell speak on Sunday evening. During his talk he pointed out time and again that if

(Mr. MacInnis.)

we did not remove the conditions which have impeded our efforts during the last twenty years, the conditions which were responsible for the last war as well as for the present one, it would be useless to go to the expense and sacrifice necessary to defeat Hitler; that other Hitlers would arise. I say to the government that if they want the support of the people to a greater extent than they are getting it to-day, they will have to concern themselves with the social welfare of the people, even though we are at war.

When one discusses the war with people, the almost invariable question is asked: What guarantees does the government give that we shall not have to go back after the war to those conditions which existed from 1930 to 1939 when our young men were deteriorating because they had no work, when they were being driven like cattle here and there? These are pertinent questions, and I plead with the government to give thought to them as a part of our war effort.

Mr. NORMAN JAUQUES (Wetaskiwin): Mr. Speaker, I shall make only a few general remarks. The word "sacrifice" has been used frequently during this debate. I am sure that the people of Canada are more than willing to make every sacrifice that is necessary for the winning of this war, but I think they realize, perhaps more than some hon. members, that sacrifices which are not necessary do not help in the war and may prove positive handicaps. I think one of the sacrifices which members of the house might make—and if they do not make it voluntarily they will, I believe, be forced to make it before we see the end of this war—is some of their ideas of what they are pleased to call sound, orthodox finance. Let me quote briefly from a recent article in the *London Times*. Nobody, I think, will accuse the *London Times* of being at all radical; yet it had this to say, referring to the changes caused by the war:

These changes call for readjustments as drastic as those which are demanded by the invention of tanks and planes. In military matters the French general staff enjoyed a prestige similar to that of our own authorities on finance. They, and the whole allied cause with them, have paid a cruel penalty for failure to adjust their thinking to the changed conditions. A hidebound persistence in methods and doctrines which may have been sound fifty years ago may easily prove as costly in the financial field as in the field of actual war. It might not lose the war, it would certainly lose the peace.

After admitting that a fundamental cause of the war was the efforts of Germany to secure foreign markets in order to strengthen her finances when her competitors were forced by their own debts to adopt a similar course, the *Times* continues: