

foodstuffs had been lying at anchor in Glasgow harbour for thirty-nine days while stevedores went on strike.

Have you ever considered what huge quantities of coal, iron, textiles and other products England could ship to us and thus be in a position to feed her people properly? Unfortunately she does not produce enough of them to meet her own needs. Workers' salaries have been raised to the saturation point in so far as the security of the national economy is concerned. Working hours have been reduced and absenteeism is becoming more and more noticeable, besides the fact that strikes are frequent all over the country. To what cause can they be ascribed? To destructive criticism and to reckless promises made to the labouring class.

Now that England is at the edge of the abyss, things have come to such a pass that the workers are being besought to prevent the country from being thrown into anarchy.

Since I am discussing the hardships suffered in England, why should I not consider what is occurring elsewhere? In France, for instance, where workers had to pay last spring 350 francs for a frugal meal in the restaurant around the corner. In Germany, where all cities except three or four have been demolished in the proportion of sixty-five to ninety per cent, and where the people have to live on United States charity, supplemented by the black market. In Russia, where thirty million people are starving and shelterless, according to the report of Brazil's ambassador Mario Prementel Brandao, published in the December 26 issue of the *Montreal Star*.

In view of this tragic situation, which affects eighty to ninety per cent of the world population, compelling them to do without even the necessities of life, forcing the majority of the people in war devastated countries to live in cellars, in improvised shelters, if not in the open, I wonder whether we are not defying Providence when we criticize in and out of season. What is to be gained by such sterile and pessimistic criticism? To convince our people they are unhappy, whereas we are living in a garden of Eden compared to the rest of the world.

I remember Mr. R. B. Bennett's election around 1930. Quebec farmers were told then that they were giving away their butter at 30 cents a pound, due, among other things, to poor government administration. What happened? Butter, if I remember rightly, later sold at 15 cents a pound. Real estate was selling at a tenth of its value and at that often found no takers. Is there anybody here who really believes that this campaign of defeatism has really helped this country? Why

do we carry on like this today? Why do we inveigh against the cost of living when we ourselves are primarily to blame for it because of our lenient attitude towards the black market and the activities of the trade unions which operate in a vicious circle? Besides, if we would only stop being the mouthpieces of trouble seekers and show ourselves capable of independent thought, could we conclude that the cost of living could reach such heights without a corresponding rise in revenue?

In the *Toronto Worker* on January 26 last, we find a passage which is extremely significant in this regard. I quote:

Present cost-of-living index is only about 12 per cent above 1929, the greatest pre-war year in Canadian history. Present wages are about 70 per cent higher than in 1929.

If this is true, and I believe it is, it clearly shows that the main reason for the rise in the cost of living is the rise in wages. If any proof were needed, the building industry would provide it. Standing timber should cost the company who owns it no more than it did several years ago, and yet when it is bought on the market it costs 300 to 400 per cent more today than it did a few years ago. There has been little increase in the price of nails, cement and asphalt shingles, since they are mainly machine made; yet the price of a finished house is prohibitive. It is evident that higher building costs are due to the increase in every class of wages.

On July 12, 1946, speaking in this house, I suggested that the tax be abolished on incomes up to \$1,500 in the case of single persons and \$3,000 in the case of married people. I advocated making up this loss of revenue by means of a ten per cent tax on the retail price of clothing, home furnishings and automobiles, such tax being collected by affixing a stamp on each article. If a woman wanted to buy a dress with a 75 cent stamp sewn inside the lining, she would never agree to pay \$10 or \$20 for it. The same thing applies to ladies' hats, which contain about one or two dollars worth of material but retail at \$10 to \$15, or even more. Such a measure would afford protection to the buyers against any unfair advantage taken by dishonest dealers and would put a stop to black market operations. When controls were lifted, all the government would have had to do was to add to its order in council a clause maintaining the prices shown by the stamp. This measure would have been a powerful means of curbing all exploitation. Prices would have increased gradually as old stocks became exhausted throughout the country. The price of a suit selling at \$35 on September 12 would not have gone up to \$50 the day after controls were