

In the speech from the throne there is nothing to indicate that the government has any proposals designed to meet the pressing needs of the Canadian people. I must say that the speech is replete with meaningless or misleading phrases. Look at the following: "The acuteness of the depression is past," "approaching prosperity," "the strength of our financial structure," and "improved conditions." Since the Prime Minister believes that the depression is fundamentally psychological I presume that he may be pardoned for his professional optimism. Evidently he believes in the old Coué formula, "Every day in every way we are getting better and better," but I would say that although he may be free to take that position in a professional sort of way, to me it seems intolerable that he, a wealthy man, should proceed with evangelistic fervour and unctuous phrases to lecture the poor people on the spiritual advantages of their poverty. The Prime Minister says:

We have no desire to undermine that high courage, that resourcefulness and ability of our citizens to emerge out of difficulties, strengthened by trial as by fire.

It does seem to me that this is very much like a man standing in security on the bank of a stream watching some poor fellows struggle in the current and go down one by one, encouraging them to battle manfully against the current because it may prove to be the very best way of developing their muscles. I think of men whom I know, who are struggling to support families and who are anxious from day to day and week to week as to where their food is to come from. Some of these men have been driven even to suicide by their anxiety, and what has the Prime Minister to say to one of them? I presume he would say, "Well, my good fellow, I know this is very hard for you, but be consoled; out of it all you will come purified as by fire. You will develop courage, initiative and all those qualities for which Canadians have striven in the past." I think of some of the women whom I know who have no opportunity of securing the medical attention they require; their eyes and their teeth are neglected; in some cases they are putting off from day to day and week to week operations that should be performed at once if their lives are not to drag on in misery. What will the Prime Minister say to one of them? "My good woman, I am very sorry; you are passing through a hard trial, but you are developing qualities of high courage, and you will emerge from these difficulties strengthened as by fire." I

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think of some of the children who to-day are being denied an education. I know there are hundreds in my own community who are given no chance to go even to the higher grades of public school; who are not having a chance to attend high school, who have not the funds to go on to university; some of them tramping about the streets without the prospect of ever getting a job. What can the Prime Minister say to these, but to urge them that in some way or another, out of it all, in spite of difficulties, they may develop a high courage and be purified as by fire?

When I think of how wealth is acquired, I ask, why should wealthy men talk to poor men in that way? It is all very well to say that in the old days men acquired wealth by their own hard work, by the sweat of their brow; but the greater part of the wealth of this country was not acquired by that means. No one can spend ten years in this house, walking around the corridors here, without learning that a good deal of the wealth of this country is acquired rather by special privileges of various kinds—grants, Beauharnois deals, concessions, charters, subsidies, tariffs, and all that sort of thing; yes, and bank charters, as my good friend from Southeast Grey (Miss Macphail) says. And then we find people who have acquired wealth by the purely arbitrary arrangements of society talking in this way to poorer people who by the same purely arbitrary measures have been deprived of the means of subsistence. I say that this kind of thing is intolerable.

The Prime Minister may talk as he likes about the strength of our financial structure. Well, may I quote a couplet which I have quoted in this house before? Lowell warns:

Think ye that building can endure
That shelters the rich and crushes the poor?

The day before parliament opened I picked up a Montreal paper in which I read of the relief given in the city of Verdun. These are the figures: for a family of three or four persons, \$5.60 per week for 14 hours' work; for a family of two persons, \$4.80 per week for 12 hours' work; for one person only, \$3.20 per week for 8 hours' work. This is the increased schedule that is coming into force; it was ratified by the council of the city of Verdun at a special meeting held on October 3, 1932. I ask whether these amounts are sufficient to support any Canadian family in decency? Yet the Prime Minister is afraid to have larger sums granted lest this might discourage initiative and so forth on the part of the people. In the same newspaper I