

*The Budget—Mr. Spencer*

national debt, amounting to about \$140,000,000 this year. In addition, of course, we have the debts of provinces and municipalities, as well as private debts, in a somewhat similar ratio. The system itself is debt creating. I notice the Minister of Finance mentioned that sixty-three per cent of our total expenditures goes to pay interest, pensions and subsidies, but most of that money goes in interest. May I remind the house once more that since the war we have paid out in interest alone no less than \$1,900,000,000, but we have not been able to pay any principal. Figures I received the other day indicate that of the debt of over \$2,000,000,000 created during the war years, no less than \$1,393,000,000 was in the form of tax exempt bonds. I do think something should be done in this regard. I know that any new bonds that have been issued have not been exempt from taxation, but there is no reason why the people who bought those tax-free bonds should not bear their share of the losses that have occurred in the last five or six years.

I should like to refer for a moment to another subject on which I have spoken in this house several times; I refer to the matter of health which is becoming an increasing problem in these times when many people are not living on a decent standard. I should like to remind the house that we have a daily sick list in Canada of no less than 180,000 people. Of course this costs a great deal, taking into consideration hospital and doctor bills, loss of work and so forth; in round figures, the annual loss is about \$300,000,000. Yet we are only spending about \$6,000,000 annually in connection with health, taking into account both federal and provincial expenditures. I make the plea that it would be a good investment to spend more money in preventive medicine and so keep down the loss from sickness. Uncertainty of employment, poverty, debt and the fear of penury and penniless old age all have the effect of developing ill health, and they are doing so at the present time.

Usually in my speech on the budget I have something to say with respect to the matter of immigration, and again I want to state my position in that regard, because I believe the subject to be important. I am not against immigration if it consists of volunteer immigrants of the type we desire, who come into Canada after a real mental and physical test, but I am absolutely against spending public money to bring people here by flowery promises with the result that many of them are disappointed and go back to their own country and Canada is given a bad name. I should like to give the house

[Mr. Spencer.]

some figures with regard to the number of people brought into this country between 1901 and 1931. In that period we brought in no less than 5,084,000 people, large numbers of whom were placed on the land. Unfortunately, due to disappointments of one kind and another, we lost no less than 3,409,000 of those immigrants, leaving a balance of 1,675,000. To bring that number of people to Canada cost this country no less than \$50,000,000. There is no reason at all why Canada should not support a much larger population than we have at the present time, but so long as we have 500,000 people unemployed and have over one million on public relief it seems to me that it would be absurd indeed to try to force people into this country.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, too many people in trying to solve this problem have looked upon unemployment as a cause rather than as a result. Until we realize that it is the result of certain factors and until we find out what those factors are we will not solve the problem. More people all the time are realizing that it is brought about very largely through the mechanization of industry, but we should remember that by this agency we are able to speed up production. That is so much the case that we find ourselves fifth among the exporting nations of the world. The hon. member for Shelburne-Yarmouth questioned that statement and said we were eighth among the nations of the world. Even if that be so it is not a bad position. But through the mechanization of industry we find that we can produce much more goods with less man power, and that being so there is no reason why we should increase our pauper population. We should realize that with our powers of production, which have been brought about not by one or two individuals but by the progress of society that has been made in past years, and that there is a cultural heritage coming to every one of us, and if we can produce this material wealth so easily we should find ways and means of distributing it. Unfortunately we lack purchasing power with which to buy these goods, and various methods have been adopted to get rid of them. Perhaps one of the most generally adopted methods is that of selling goods on time, with people going into debt for them. That has only a temporary effect, and every time a period of deflation develops the situation is made so much worse. Then some people suggest that we should export the surplus. It does not pay a country to export goods unless it is prepared to import goods, and allowing for what Canada owes in interest and for