

will you allow me, Mr. Speaker, to call your attention to another phase of the question, and that is: what are the practical things that can be done and to what extent are we doing these practical things?

And now I make an acknowledgment to the House; that is, that I feel the duty and necessity of saying a few words about my own department, the Department of Trade and Commerce. I have not projected that department nor myself before this House nor before the country; I have been very modest with reference to the work that was going on. I have come to the conclusion that I have been a little too modest and that maybe my department has not taken that place in the minds of hon. gentlemen to which it is rightly entitled. I do not speak in this way from any personal vanity, or any personal regret; but I would like the people of this country and the members of this House to know something of what we really have been doing; and I speak in order that my department may not only have their sympathy but also their active help and co-operation. So, I know, Mr. Speaker, you will pardon the allusion that I am about to make to my own department.

One of the things that I think we ought to do, and may well do, is to take stock of the situation in Canada as it will probably be when peace comes. What is it in the Dominion of Canada that we shall consume, that we shall find necessary for our daily wants? To what extent can that be produced in Canada, and to what extent must we depend upon outside countries for these supplies? First—and I am not going to labour the point, for I wish to finish my remarks by six o'clock—I think that the thing we ought to do is to sit down and take stock of the resources and of the wants of the country. And with this idea—that, knowing what we require, and knowing how much is produced by ourselves at the present time, and for how much of it we have to depend upon foreign countries, we may, in a business way, set ourselves as Canadians to the solution of the problem of our wants. And I think the most accurate statistics that it is possible to have on that subject should be within the departments in Ottawa, and more especially within my own department, and should be there for the use of the House and of the business men of the country—information, comprehensive, accurate and fresh, as the foundation for the active work of dealing with this problem.

The next thing I think it is necessary
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for us to do, and which my department is trying to do, and I think is pretty effectively doing, is to find out in what fields outside of Canada goods that are made in Canada, and the products raised in Canada, may find sale and consumption. There are business enterprises and aggregations of capital which may better busy themselves with the home market of Canada, and with that only. There are other aggregations of enterprise and capital which may better busy themselves entirely in providing for the foreign markets. And there are other aggregations of capital and enterprise that may most economically combine both, and, making a base of the home market, extend their trade to the supply of foreign countries and thus diminish the incidence of overhead and general expenses upon their total trade. So, my department, while I have had charge of it—and as it commenced before, and I hope will continue—is particularly occupied with that problem.

Through what media? In the first place, we have the medium of the Trade Commissioners whom we now have in every important district of the United Kingdom, in the overseas dominions, and in such foreign countries as it has seemed best, up to the present time, to enter. These trade commissioners are, I believe I can say without exaggeration, doing their business on the whole excellently well, and some of them deserve all the praise that can possibly be given them for the energy, the capacity, and the success with which they are carrying on their work. These trade commissioners are diligently engaged, from the first of January to the thirty-first of December in every year, gathering information in the districts to which they are accredited and the areas to which their work applies. They are gathering that information judiciously, and not simply sending in anything which would make a paragraph or a report. They send in weekly and monthly reports, and these reports are carefully edited and published in our bulletin, and in that form sent out weekly to now some 6,000 or 8,000 of selected business men in the different parts of Canada. It has been a source of great gratification to me to receive the kind words and hearty endorsement of business men in every part of Canada, testifying to the interest with which these bulletins are regarded as welcome, helpful and profitable visitors to their offices and their homes. But the trade commissioners are assisted, and the scope of the whole system is widened by the privilege which we have,