

the fact that we are in the midst of a great world crisis, greater the world has never seen, and that the pendulum has swung away out into space—far from its ordinary oscillations, far beyond any point it has ever approached before, and that of necessity it must return, and during the period following this war pass to the other extreme before adjusting itself again to its ordinary movements, indicating the fat and lean periods to be found in a cycle of years with the world in a normal condition.

Sir George Foster, in his "Call to Action" substantially took the position that Canada's business is made up of the aggregate of the individual businesses within Canada, and that those men responsible for the country's industry are best fitted to say what should be done and how it should be done, so as to put our house in order for the unprecedented conditions that must of necessity follow the ultra-abnormal situation in which we find ourselves to-day. It was his desire, as clearly stated in his "call to action," that our business men should seriously take up the country's business problems, seriously engage in a study of them, as well as of the opportunities promised by the new era which must follow the war. In other words, he wished them to get together in units of industries, to study, and study, and study, and then to come forward in convention and give the Government through him their best judgment as to what Canada should be doing now—not tomorrow, so as to make some adequate preparation for the future.

No one will question the right of Sir George Foster to call upon citizens of Canada to give the country the best that is in them in this period of peril. Did I say peril? What evidence have we of any peril? We would require something stronger than those binoculars of which we heard so much in Ottawa shortly after the opening of the war, in order to make out any sign of peril on this continent. On the contrary, all evidences are those of prosperity, and unbridled prosperity at that. The country's financial statements show it from time to time; it is to be seen on our streets—everywhere.

It is the old story of Thomas, the doubting apostle, who had to see to believe. In other words, we must break through the ice before we can be made to realize the danger. And yet, are we not one of the participants in this struggle? Belgium, our ally, likewise is one. I am not going to recount what has happened in Belgium, or to many of her women and children, but perhaps the Hun would be more considerate of our women and children if he got loose amongst us. Perhaps!

Let us return then to Sir George Foster's proposed convention and follow it through to the finish. Because it is interesting as throwing a side light on one of the weaknesses in our democracy. First, was there any need for an investigation and study of the country's industries? I believe we must all admit there was, and there still is. In the decade preceding this war, our prosperity was handed to us through loans of millions of money by Europe for the building of the country's plant. Today, it is war orders causing every wheel in the country to be speeded up to its utmost limit, resulting in the flooding of the country with money drawn from the sacrifices of Europe. Tomorrow, when peace is declared, what is to be? Aye, that is the question that Sir George Foster was deeply concerned about, and it is a question we should be grappling with now, or do we prefer the cold plunging through the thin ice of unpreparedness which will be our fate unless we wake up to a realization of our position?