

spent its money and its time only on the study of taxation and can bring any recommendations on this question that are attractive to provincial and municipal governments, then their work has been well worth while on that basis alone. We cannot expect extensive building, either under building societies or under the aegis of provincial or municipal governments, until our system of taxation is completely readjusted. I urge upon the government with all the earnestness of which I am capable that full and complete study be given to this phase of our national scheme of things.

In the last municipal election in Toronto there was proposed to the electors a by-law. In rejecting that by-law, the electors declared with no small degree of emphasis that under its terms they were not in favour of any housing and slum clearance plan. But it would be unfair if this interpretation alone were to be placed upon the result of that vote. After all, the municipal voter is a realty taxpayer, and as some one recently so well expressed it, to ask a realty taxpayer to vote for that by-law was like asking the Women's Christian Temperance Union to vote for more beer parlours. There has been placed upon the realty taxpayer, particularly in the last few years, an almost inconceivable burden, a burden which has steadily increased, and his fear was expressed by his vote at the municipal election which I have mentioned. I do not believe there was a single person who voted against that by-law but had in his heart the desire to see the slums of Toronto cleared away and some low cost housing plan instituted; but in fairness to his own family and in the face of his own direct responsibility to pay taxes et al, he could not see his way clear to vote upon himself a further burden when he could scarcely carry the burdens under which he already had to struggle. That, it seems to me, is the lesson which is taught us by that incident in Toronto, comparatively a few weeks ago.

I repeat that these questions of relief and realty taxation are interlocked in the present set-up. What is being done at the moment? What is suggested is to place a further burden upon the taxpayer of the municipality, the man who has a home and who perforce must pay taxes upon it. The demand is one which is beyond the pale of reason, for after all there is a limit beyond which we cannot go if we wish to maintain our homes. I stand here to-night to speak not only for the people whom I have the honour to represent and whom I am so proud to represent in this house, but for all realty taxpayers in all parts of the dominion who find unbearable the burden of taxation for relief and other purposes, of which I have spoken. It is of paramount importance to our dominion that our citizens maintain their homes. As I have al-

[Mr. Massey.]

ready drawn to the attention of the house, we have neglected our housing—and neglected it, I feel, shamefully in many ways. We have forced many, who have not had the means to build or own their own homes, to live in places which are a disgrace to the community. We have done little or nothing to aid those compelled to live in such surroundings to live in better places. Very little interest has been taken in housing societies, housing centres and similar organizations which have been developed in Canada; now we are faced with a further step in the wrong direction, which places additional burdens upon those who find it an almost insuperable difficulty to maintain what they have.

In the speech from the throne we were told that the national employment commission had concluded its duties. Before the present government came into office, and during the election of 1935, we were told from coast to coast, from platforms, over the radio, in the press and other organs of publicity, that we should vote Liberal and get action. There is not the slightest doubt that over forty per cent of the people of Canada who voted, voted Liberal; but I ask you, Mr. Speaker, have they got action? The silence on the benches opposite confirms the suggested truth of my question. We have not got action.

Mr. HANSON: Did we have action before?

Mr. MASSEY: We are having reaction at the moment, apparently. If hon. members opposite go into their own municipalities and ask the small home owner if he is better off now than he was just over two years ago, and that small home owner answers as he feels, he will say, "No, I am worse off." Those are the facts; that is the situation which we face. We may have heard a good deal so far this session from hon. gentlemen opposite in regard to increasing good times. I am sure that if they will compare Canada's position as world trader in 1938 with Canada's position as a world trader in the middle of 1935, they will find that we have risen only in proportion with increasing good times throughout the world; but at the same time there is not one hon. gentleman opposite who will not admit that at the moment we are facing a recession—I believe that is the new technical term for a depression—and that times are not as good as they were a few months ago.

The hon. member for St. Paul's (Mr. Ross) this afternoon called attention to the fact that unemployment at the moment was increasing rather than decreasing, and yet in face of such a situation we now find that the municipalities are threatened with the problem of themselves having to assume direct relief. This is