

upon our present members." We must expect to be replaced by others if we fail to find a solution for our difficulties.

In all that I am saying to-night I want to avoid captious criticism. I have very frequently criticized what I believe to be the mistaken policies of the government of the day. I have often severely criticized statements made by members of that government. But I have yet to impute unworthy motives, or indifference, to any member of the government. In these days there are not lacking those who are quite confident that they know the reasons for our present sufferings, the causes of the present depression, and who are equally confident that they know the remedies for these conditions. In my opinion it is not always the most vociferous who are the best informed. Intelligent analysis of public affairs is much less common than hasty and ill-considered declamation. Too often the less a man knows of the implications and difficulties of national government, the greater the confidence he displays in declaring his opinions in relation thereto. For that reason I propose to-night to suggest rather than to declare.

First of all, I think it would be advisable to make a short diagnosis of the causes of our present troubles as I see them. During the past two years I have made a list of the various reasons I have heard ascribed for this depression, and I can assure you it is a very lengthy list. I am not going to quote all the reasons that have been given, because some of them are in my opinion foolish in the extreme. But there are some twelve that I have here which seem to me to be contributing causes to a greater or less extent.

I want to refer briefly to these causes in order that I may take the liberty of suggesting what I believe are remedies that may be applied by this present government and by this parliament. I will first recapitulate them: The war; war reparations; armaments; the capitalistic system; the gold standard; the banking system; deficiency of currency and credit; overproduction; the mechanization of industry; the paralysing load of debt; fear and international distrust; restriction of trade, and tariffs.

I do not know that I have placed these in the order of their importance, but if they can be regarded as contributing causes, I would ask what this parliament can do to prevent a recurrence of the conditions we have experienced in the past arising from these causes, and to remedy those that now exist. I would first premise that in my opinion, some of these causes can be eliminated only by international action; others partly by national action but

[Mr. Butcher.]

only wholly by international action, and some wholly by national action—and when I say national action I mean action by this Canadian parliament.

Let us further investigate these causes, the first of which is the war. I do not suppose a single individual can be found within the Dominion of Canada who would claim that the great war had nothing whatever to do with our present condition and our present difficulties. The question may be asked whether we would have had difficulties similar to these had there been no great war. Doubtless in this house there are many men who remember the year 1914, who remember that during the spring and summer of that year thoughtful men all over the country were wondering what was going to happen during the following winter. Even during that summer season there was unemployment, and people were wondering what would happen in the fall. Unemployment clouds were threatening over our heads, but as we thought they were about to break the clouds of war broke upon us instead, and only then were the clouds of unemployment dispelled. But how much better we would have been prepared to meet the situation at that time if we had been compelled then to face the problem of unemployment. I have but to direct attention to a few facts to enable us all to realize how much easier it would have been to deal with the situation at that time. In 1914, according to the Canada Year Book, our national debt was \$314,301,625. On March 31 last, according to the same authority, our debt was \$2,261,000,000; it had been multiplied practically by seven. In 1914 the interest on our national debt was approximately \$12,605,000, and it is now about \$121,000,000; it has been multiplied by about ten. In 1913 the cost of government in Canada was \$144,456,878, while in 1930 it was \$398,176,246, or an increase of some \$254,000,000. Again I point out how much easier it would have been for Canada to meet this condition of unemployment had it come in 1914, and this brings me to one of two lessons we might learn from that great event, which brought upon the world so much sorrow and suffering. One lesson is that we should strive, as we have striven always to maintain world peace, and the other is that we should carefully avoid all those occasions and all those acts that are so apt to lead to war. One of those acts, I would say, is the restriction of trade, the desire to do anything other than trade freely with other countries. I think restriction of trade undoubtedly caused war in the days that are gone, and it might easily cause war again.