

there, because it was found that army officers received bribes to promulgate this false news, and they were tried and convicted and are now serving sentences. Now we know why we have so often these recurring panics which are disturbing the peace of the world, and which, if they do not bring war, always bring fat contracts to the armament firms. Not only that, but we have the evidence—no, I will not say evidence—but it has been charged, and so far as I know the charge has not been denied, that the information which was given to us upon the German armament could not be relied upon, but was false and exaggerated. I do not speak of my own knowledge as to that, but I give as my authority an article published by Mr. A. G. Gardiner in the Daily News and Leader of London. I call attention to this paragraph in that article:

How that is done was revealed in the case of Mr. Mulliner of the Coventry Ordnance works. It was Mr. Mulliner who was the true author and begetter of the famous panic of 1908-9. It was he who supplied Parliament and the press with the material for that memorable agitation. It was he who was quoted with such effect by Mr. Arthur Lee, Mr. Duke, Mr. Balfour and others. It was he who was finally solemnly received by the Cabinet—the British Cabinet—to tell them all about the goings-on of Krupp's, the 38,000 new workmen whom Mr. Lee said they were employing—as a matter of fact there was a decline in the number of men employed between 1907 and 1909—the acceleration in shipbuilding and the menace of that fatal year 1912 when the Germans, we were led to suppose, intended to make short work of the British Empire. Fresh from that momentous interview Mr. Asquith and Mr. McKenna told the House of Commons that Germany would have 17 dreadnoughts in 1912 instead of the projected 13; Mr. Balfour, not to be outdone, said there would be 21 and possibly 25. When in due time 1912 arrived the Germans had 12 dreadnoughts completed.

This information, which was given by Mr. Mulliner, was repeated by ministers on the floor of the House of Commons in England, and repeated also on the floor of this House by hon. gentlemen opposite. I do not charge any intention of deceit on the part of the Prime Minister in this regard, but I will charge deceit if, in the face of this evidence, we again hear of such a thing as an emergency.

The German peril has disappeared, if indeed there ever was such a thing; but we have another menace and another peril which is far more dangerous; a peril which affects not the fate of the Empire, but which is bound to bring suffering to hundreds of thousands of His Majesty's subjects in Canada. I may say that this peril has found the Government singularly

[Sir Wilfrid Laurier].

callous with respect to it. Within the last four weeks the Minister of Finance has reviewed the economic situation in Canada twice; once in Montreal at the commercial travellers' banquet, and again at Gananoque, in his riding. On both occasions he pronounced the financial condition of the country perfectly satisfactory. According to him, it has not always been satisfactory, but at the moment he was speaking it had become satisfactory again; there were no more clouds on the horizon, the storm had passed. That I may not do injustice to the Minister of Finance, I quote his words as reported in the Montreal Gazette, which authority I suppose he will accept. At Montreal, he is reported by the Gazette to have said:

Our country has experienced its time of stress, and will come through it well. I believe the crisis has been reached, and passed in Canada, as in other countries of the world.

According to these words of the Minister of Finance, the crisis has come and passed, and once more navigation is easy and Canada is in a good position. I am not surprised at these words, in view of the fact that two years ago the gentlemen opposite were exclaiming in times of prosperity: let well enough alone. The Minister of Finance was satisfied two years ago to let well enough alone; he would not then improve the situation; he would not improve what was good in prosperous times, and now, in bad times, he and his party will not reform what is bad. We have had it from my young friend from York, N.B. (Mr. McLeod) that we have reached hard times, and the people of Canada have, I believe, come to the conclusion that, as the Government did not improve what was good in prosperous times, we are now not far away from bad times. Well, the bad times are here. When the Minister of Finance stated, as he did that the crisis was over, he had two things staring him in the face. For the first time since 1897 we hear of such a thing as non-employment in Canada. It is well known that at the present time prosperous establishments of long standing are reducing the number of their employees, that others are reducing the hours of work, that others are reducing the number of their employees and the hours of labour as well and that others have closed down. And yet, in the face of that situation, when there are to-day, in Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg, Regina, Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver, not fewer than 100,000 men asking for work, the Minister