Hon. Mr. LAIRD: Did you ever try it?

Hon. Mr. HAIG: No, I never did, but I know from men whom I see on relief that once they get on it they do not want to get off. It is very difficult to get them off, because they say to themselves, "We are now on relief and if we get off we may not be able to get back again." That is what they are afraid of.

These matters that have been referred to, such as the employment of young people in industry, the improvement of homes, and figures showing reduction in the unemployed, are all very good, but they do not get to the core of the problem, nor within a mile of it. And your trade improvement will not help you a bit; you will have just as many unemployed a year from now as you have today, despite the improvement in trade. Farmers who used to employ as many as twenty men on big farms are now getting along with a quarter of that number by doing their work with machinery. In Alberta this summer I saw a farmer havesting a section of land, the work being done by only another man besides himself, and this farmer told me that some years ago he used to employ seven or eight men.

Hon. Mr. LACASSE: How can you remedy that condition?

Hon. Mr. HAIG: You cannot remedy it; that is one of the issues you have to face. But unemployment in our cities can be overcome to a great extent by getting people occupied on building. You are talking about having building done by government institutions, and the Government are talking about a housing scheme under which houses will be built and rented. That will not solve the problem, but will only make it worse, for it absolutely kills any prospect of private enterprise engaging in this work. The way to solve the problem is to make it worth while for private builders to build houses. I can tell you that in the years from 1925 to 1927, for instance, there would be as many as 5,000 men engaged in the building trades in Winnipeg, but I doubt if this last summer there were more than 50. In these figures I am including men who sell materials, who do excavating, who cut the timber, or who are on the railroads bringing the lumber to the city—in short, all men engaged in any of the occupations connected with building.

Now, honourable senators, I have spoken longer than I had intended.

Hon. Mr. BLONDIN: Go on.

Hon. Mr. HAIG: I want to emphasize the picture just as I see it. I say to honourable members of this Chamber: do not make fun of the Social Credit Government in Alberta. The people of Manitoba are very sensible, as I have mentioned before, but when you are talking to them they will say: "You fellows have failed to solve our problems; so we will try the other fellow." I have asked some of these people, "Do you believe in this $25-a-month business?" They say, "No, but things cannot be any worse than they are now." And conditions in Saskatchewan are not so good as those in Manitoba.

What we need is to have the debt problem solved. The Bennett Government put through the Farmers' Creditors Arrangement Act, which helped to relieve some of the farmers' troubles, but unfortunately it created other difficulties. The mortgage companies are satisfied with it, and so are the municipalities, but the small storekeeper, the doctor and people in many other classes in the smaller towns have been deprived of what was owing to them; sometimes of the whole amount.

Hon. Mr. ASELTINE: The unsecured creditors.

Hon. Mr. HAIG: Yes; they were wiped right out. And that is a very serious matter. In Manitoba the Board of Review are taking a sensible attitude. They are trying to say that the amount owing to unsecured creditors should be set off against the debtor's exemptions. I think they are acting illegally, but that is what they are doing.

Manitoba owes about $125,000,000. I should think that if the debts of the municipalities were included, the total amount owing by the province would be probably about $300,000,000. I do not believe the province can ever pay that back. You ask, "Why did they borrow it?" And I reply, "Why did you lend it to them?" The surest action a banker can take to break a man is to lend him too much money. You loaned those people too much money, and you put the rate of interest up to eight per cent—higher than it was in Ontario or Quebec. Numbers of life insurance companies said they were getting eight per cent in Saskatchewan and Manitoba and therefore they could increase the dividend rate on their policies. But they forgot that there must be some reason why the rate was so much higher in those Western Provinces than in the East. That reason was that the risk was greater in the West. In 1882 Moose Jaw and all the country south of it was dried out and the farmers had to leave, but in 1910 and 1912