

seems to be little attempt made to train young people to the trades requiring skill. Many employers frankly stated that they had not time to train apprentices, and that the wage-earning power of the apprentice being small, he was frequently drawn away from his trade in the early stages by the greater wage he could earn in one of the employments where skill was not required.

That was twenty-six years ago—I was just about right when I said twenty-five years ago—that was a time when we had a boom, and when there were many opportunities for work. But even in those days we had largely passed away from the apprenticeship system. I quote another sentence:

It is found, too, even when the apprenticeship system has survived, that it is to-day necessary to supplement the practice of the shop by the instruction of the school for the development of intelligent workmen. A very notable example of this is given in the interesting evidence of Mr. Grant Hall, in his account of the apprentice classes conducted in the Canadian Pacific railway shops.

Again:

Many of the witnesses also who testified had served apprenticeship in the British isles, and their evidence showed that a large number of them had found it necessary for the mastery of their work to study the theoretical side of their trade and supplement their general education by attendance at evening classes, while many trained in Canada had done the same thing through the medium of the correspondence school.

We find here that the apprenticeship system in itself is not sufficient. In most trades it has been almost abandoned, but in any case it has to be supplemented by technical training. The point I was making before the recess was that if the government really wants to do something helpful in this matter, it ought to make grants to our existing technical institutions and to extend their scope. In that way we would be doing something to meet the real needs of the young people. Someone may say that the report from which I have just quoted is only a local report, dealing with conditions in one of the western provinces. I should like to read a paragraph from the other report to which I referred before the recess, the report of the royal commission on technical education, under the chairmanship of Doctor James W. Robertson. The report was delivered in 1913 and took up four huge volumes. I thought everyone knew of this report, but during the recess I had considerable difficulty in digging it out of the archives in the library. I commend this statement to the minister:

The whole system of apprenticeship has changed during the last ten or twenty years, to the detriment of the mechanic. Apprentices are not required to put themselves under indenture; it seems contrary to the genius of

Canadian people to indenture. Apprentices learn only a small part of trade as a rule, owing to machinery, hence fail to become mechanics. Under old apprenticeship system men were more skilled.

There is really no apprenticeship now, but more and more specialization every year, so that a man does not master the details of an industry to-day as he used to, and the boy does not get a chance. The apprentice system is practically obsolete as far as manufacturing operations are concerned, and no factory or concern can keep a boy at apprentice wages after he becomes useful.

The above will be found on page 1722 of the report. After a quarter of a century, what do we find? In order to meet a great national emergency the minister proposes to instruct this commission that is to be appointed to investigate and report to him upon plans for the establishment of an apprenticeship system in industry. As I said before dinner, I think that the proposal is absolutely absurd. If the minister wants to, he can go to these various exhaustive volumes and he will find details of the conditions that prevailed a quarter of a century ago, and have become worse since that time. Industry, as it has become more mechanized and more highly specialized, is less liable to-day to go back to the apprenticeship system. Under these circumstances why load down this commission with the task outlined in paragraph (g)?

I submit to the minister that if he is thinking about the future of industry, he has already tens of thousands of skilled mechanics now in the bread lines. Any one who has looked into the statistics of local welfare or relief agencies knows there are large numbers of men who are highly skilled and who cannot get work. What is the advantage in training more men? It may be said that it is a good thing to have these young fellows educated, with which I agree; I am ready heartily to endorse anything that will give these young people a better chance at school, but surely this is not a solution of the unemployment problem. When we in this part of the house suggest pensions for older people, we will say starting at sixty years, in order to allow the younger people to have a chance, we are immediately ridiculed as being impractical. I submit that that is one of the most practical suggestions we could possibly make. If carried out it would leave room for some of these young men instead of crowding into the labour market a few more by means of an attempted apprenticeship system. Such action will not solve the unemployment problem. I take it that this commission is to be set up to deal not with educational matters as such, but rather with unemployment and relief.