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CANADA

## House of Commons Debates

OFFICIAL REPORT

## SPEECHES

OF

HON. SIR GEORGE FOSTER

MINISTER OF TRADE AND COMMERCE

ON

DEVELOPMENT OF INDUSTRY AND TRADE

AND

THE QUESTION OF OCEAN TRANSPORT

In the House of Commons, Ottawa, on April 18 and 26, 1916.

DEVELOPMENT OF INDUSTRY AND  
TRADE.

Tuesday, April 18, 1916.

On the motion for Committee of Supply:

Sir GEORGE FOSTER (Minister of Trade and Commerce): I am going to ask the House this afternoon, before taking up my Estimates, to listen to a short statement which I think may be of some interest in connection with the trade and commerce of the country. I am not making any apology for asking the House to listen to me for a few moments on this matter, as I think it is one of very great importance, and one to which, probably, neither side of the House has devoted that amount of time, energy, and attention which 224 representatives of Canada, comprising business men, men of capacity, men of influence, men of ripe and extended views, men of great experience in commercial and business matters, might have found it profitable to devote.

I do not believe that any of us in this House, or that any one in the country quite appreciates the tremendous transition which is to take place in this country some time

soon when war ceases and peace commences, a transition rendered necessary because of the diversion that has taken place along certain lines since the war began. At the risk of repeating something of the sentiments, if not the words which I have already expressed in this House, I am going to call the attention of the House to a few prominent features of the situation.

What has happened in this country since August, 1914? The happenings have been gradual and, therefore, they have not impressed themselves upon our minds with the same force as if, instead of being gradual, they had come suddenly. But they are none the less important and none the less grave because they have been gradual.

Up to the present time, 300,000 5 p.m. adults have been drawn from the fields of industry, from the factory, the business house, the farm, the mine, and the fisheries. These have been abstracted from productive work in these lines, and if this war continues for a year, or a year and a half more, 500,000 adults will have been abstracted from productive work in this country. Now, if the Minister of the Interior had come to this House two years ago and stated