

remedies. They might have made a summary and a pronouncement which might have been to some extent a settler of the question. That was not done.

Following that report was a statement made by the Minister of Labour, and, as I think the Committee were not broad enough, I think the Minister of Labour was not deep enough. He spoke of several superficial and obvious remedies. All, I think, admitted that the statement of the situation was correct—that there was a large amount of unemployment in the country. But the Minister of Labour did not go deep enough in this respect, that he did not allude to that which is the foundation of the law of supply and demand, namely, the proportion between the cash and means of the consumer and the product which he wishes to purchase.

Perhaps, in the first place, it would be just as well to state briefly how the labouring man, the mechanic, the trades unionist and the organizations of which they are members have contributed to the lack of employment in the country. In their lodges, in their arguments, and also, I think, in their beliefs, they have divided the population into two classes, the workingman and the capitalist, leaving altogether out of the calculation the great mass of consumers, the public. They have had no regard for them. What means did they adopt? First of all, in an arbitrary manner they fixed high rates for labour and, through their numbers, their operations and their influence upon their "enemy," as they supposed the capitalist to be, they have maintained and increased from time to time the high rates for labour. Of course, when I speak of high rates I mean relative rates. They can be estimated and judged only by their proportion to money and to other essentials. Then from time to time they threatened the capitalist or the manufacturer with a strike if their views and demands were not complied with. They used that threat as a terrorism. Not only did they do that in what may be termed a selfish way, but in their own interest specially they kept out of employment a great number of men, some of whom may now be in the list of unemployed. They would not allow those who were not members of their organization or society to have employment at all. If any non-union men were employed, they would threaten to strike, and the employer knew that a strike would occur—that there would be an entire suspension of his work, and perhaps his ruin might result; so they

had their way, and there were a number of people unemployed, and the list was gradually growing.

Again, the employer of labour knew that his product was at a very high rate. Thinking men, careful and cautious men, who have in their keeping the funds of others—for instance, the bankers—saw that the high prices could not be maintained. The bankers confined their loans to objects which would not be liable to the great fluctuation which was supposed was going on. The security companies, the loan companies, those who represented mortgages, all those engaged in money lending, were afraid there would be a great slump in real estate. They restricted their loans, and when the prices of houses and other buildings were very high, they did not want to become the possessors of them at the very high rate because, perhaps, they would be unable to dispose of them at more than 50 or 75 per cent of what was required to be advanced; and they cautiously withdrew.

Other employments followed suit. A man who wished to buy a house contrasted his money with the sum that was demanded by a contractor. Contractors could not get people to buy their houses or to employ them; and the effect was gradually to contract the number of hands employed.

Then, again, every householder or other person who received a bill opened his eyes with astonishment to find that so little work could be done for so large an amount of money; and no person was inclined to have any work done which he could avoid or postpone. And again, the amounts required were out of proportion to the means of those who had to pay.

This condition began to have an effect upon the people generally. It induced a consensus of opinion that labour was too high; and everyone began to look upon the labourer with aversion, because the high demands that he made diminished the resources and comforts of the persons who had to pay for labour. All this began to work upon the community; all these contributory causes tended to diminish the use and occupation of labour.

But that was not all that the labourers did. Without knowing it, they created a distrust and an aversion. Distrust began to pervade the community, and when that tidal wave sets in there is no force that can operate against it, there is nothing that can control it, and it has its way.