

*The Address—Mr. Meighen*

is progress in building up a deficit, and so far as industry goes, is progress in liquidation and so far as population goes, is progress towards the equator.

I come now to the question of industry, but before I do so there is a paragraph to which it would be really a shame not to refer. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, because I know you are possessed of this quality of mind, just to meditate on the exquisite humour latent in this boast:

The housing scarcity which was so serious as a result of the cessation of building during the war has now been fairly met and the nation is free to turn its capital into more immediately productive channels.

I do not dispute the fidelity, to truth, of that paragraph. Far be it from me to deny this government the capacity to solve any housing problem that ever affected a nation. Put this government in charge of any country on earth and in two years there will be no housing problem to solve. They will solve the housing problem, not by building houses for the people, but by chasing the people from the houses. It may be worth while to add that the decrease in building permits last year from the year before was, according to the minister's own return, 7.3 per cent and from the previous year 17 per cent. What is to be thought of this conglomeration of falsities by which the minister seeks, at the expense of the people, to parade the alleged achievements of this administration?

Let me now make some reference to another question which has received some discussion during the summer. It has reference to a statement I made in the city of Stratford on the 20th day of August last, this statement which, according to the newspaper reports I have here, was to the effect that one thousand factories—

Mr. RANKIN: Two thousand.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I will come to that—had gone out of business since this government came into power. My words just now were "according to the newspapers." I think I said two thousand, and I know that later on I said two thousand after the violent and rather offensive contradictions of the Prime Minister had been adduced. By the figure two thousand I am prepared to stand.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Give us a list of them.

Mr. MEIGHEN: Yes, I could give the Prime Minister a list.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: Will he?

[Mr. Meighen.]

Mr. MEIGHEN: In fact, I think a list of most of them is in the hands of the Minister of Labour now.

Mr. MURDOCK: No.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I would ask my right hon. friend—

Mr. MEIGHEN: I do not think I should be asked to give publication to individual names, but I will give the proof of what I said right now. I hold in my hand the report of R. G. Dun & Co. for the last three years. Does the Prime Minister dispute that R. G. Dun & Co. is a responsible firm?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: I will quote to my right hon. friend from R. G. Dun & Co.

Mr. MEIGHEN: What I stated was that that number had closed their doors. I did not state that that number had failed. Many a business closes its doors that does not fail.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: On Saturday night.

Mr. MEIGHEN: This is a quotation in Saturday Night from R. G. Dun & Co. The number of failures, not including those who merely closed their doors, was 625 in 1924. These would not all be included prior to the 20th of August, and I will come to a division later. In 1923, there were 792 and in 1922, 857. The first two years, 1922 and 1923, added together total 1,649 in failures alone. The proportion of the number given for 1924 which would be prior to the 20th of August is exactly 399, and I do not think it will be asserted that there were more failures in the latter part of 1924 than in the former part. Adding 399 to 1,649 we get a total of 2,048 failures according to R. G. Dun & Co., from the advent of this government up to August 20, 1924. In these figures, I repeat, are not included those, too many of them, who closed without the process of liquidation at all. For example, the big glass factory which was referred to last session in the budget speech did not go into liquidation. Have I established what I said? I asserted at the same time, from the same platform, that in the same period other industries had opened, but I stated what was the absolute fact, that in employing capacity they did not compare with those which had closed. This is what has been going on. This is what is supposed to satisfy the people of Canada. The debt of our country grows day by day, month by month. It is not possible any longer to conceal the truth; it is not possible