

as well the additional demands of a ravaged and hungry world. The danger may be even greater than it is now.

We are bound to recognize that the machinery of price control is difficult to administer. Many of its provisions are exceedingly repugnant to a people, most of whose lives have been lived in a relatively free economy. It is the simplest thing in the world to pick flaws in the provisions, to point out inconsistencies and unfairnesses that are incidental to its operation. Though most admit the necessity in the abstract, there are literally hundreds of applications aimed to break it in specific cases, and each is supported with excellent arguments to prove the case in point. It is possible that to the ordinary difficulties may be added others. If it should happen that the United States does not attain the degree of success that we do in maintaining the price level, the spectacle of much higher prices for many primary products there, as compared with ours, will create a great deal of unrest. Indeed, there are many evidences that it is occurring now.

It is here that we can render the greatest service. If our efforts to control prices fail, the failure will come from the chain of circumstances which result from one group in our economy seeking and securing increased prices for the goods or services which they supply, and this action in turn prompting other groups to do the same. In the course of time the situation gets out of hand and the attempt at control collapses. In peace, and under normal conditions, it is a natural impulse for everyone to try to get the highest possible return for his efforts. That has been one of the outstanding features of free enterprise. In war, this cannot be, it must not be—indeed, it is not, in my opinion—the guiding principle; and as witnesses to the fact I would call the hundreds of thousands of young men and women who have offered their all for their country on the battle-field, and the thousands of faithful men and women throughout the length and breadth of this land who from the outbreak of war have given unselfishly of their time and talents to their country, without thought of recompense.

But that is not all. I believe that the vast majority of those engaged in the production of supplies, whether as employers or as employees, are animated by the same guiding principle. And, after all, how could it be otherwise, since the boys on the battle fronts, using these materials, are the flesh and blood of those who are producing them? There are, of course, exceptions to this rule, and often the excep-

tions exercise an influence, far out of proportion to their numbers, over their fellows. But when these exceptions assert that those with whom they are associated—whether they be employers or employees, whether in factory, farm or forest—will only put forth their maximum effort if they secure an ever-increasing return in dollars and cents, it is our duty to suggest to them that they are not truly reflecting the spirit of the Canadian people, and that any effort to wring a peculiar advantage from their country's extremity, when their country is battling for its life, does not present a very edifying spectacle.

I yield to no one in this House in the belief that the price level that existed on the outbreak of war, the level which, for my part, I am seeking to maintain, involves grave inconsistencies and unfairnesses as between not only various economic groups, but various geographical sections as well. I believe that this price level, while normally considered to be the result of the play of forces in a free economy, was in actual fact nothing of the kind. I believe that it represented a basis in which, in the main, the price levels for secondary industry were artificially raised, largely at the expense of, and to the great detriment of, the vast body of primary industry in this country. I believe that in due course the rectifying of this injustice, not only between groups in this country, but also generally in relation to conditions existing south of the border, will be one of the most pressing problems with which Canada is faced. But any general proposal to upset the equilibrium by attempting to rectify it now, when men are dying on the battle-field, is absurd and would be the height of folly.

But there are those who fear that we, as a small nation subjected to titanic world forces, cannot expect to do otherwise than swim with the tide and follow the example of nations larger than we are. May I remind them of the advice of a great public man in the United States, but born in Canada, who recently visited Ottawa, when he counselled us to "have faith—have faith in ourselves."

On the only other occasion on which I had the honour and privilege of addressing this House, I spoke, in part, as follows. I hope honourable members will pardon my quoting what I said:

Far removed as we are from the racial and national animosities of the old world, perhaps we by precept and example may be able to afford a beacon light to a strife-torn world. . . . Canada's contribution to the prosecution of the war has amazed the world, and often the larger nations among our Allies have sought to emulate our example. . . . Perhaps it is ordained that we shall exercise on the post-war world an influence far out of proportion to our numbers.