

That is the contention of the Canadian Welfare Council, which is not in any way a political organization. I read it because they describe the condition better than I can. May I ask my right hon. friend whether these statements of his before the election, and particularly his statement after the election, were merely flights of eloquence and a weaving of words and dreaming of dreams, or did he believe his own words? I find myself wondering whether the right hon. gentleman did believe them. If he did, why has there not been some action in regard to these matters? Perhaps it is all theory; perhaps the right hon. gentleman did not have—I do not think he did—in his early days sufficient contact with the difficulties of people who are poor, to realize how serious a picture he painted, and painted so well that one might think he understood, he really saw the picture that he painted.

I should like to ask the Minister of Labour: Is it just a coincidence that Canada, of all nations of the empire, is the least advanced in social legislation, and that this government, led by the right hon. gentleman, has been in power since 1921, with the exception of five years? Is it just a coincidence, Mr. Speaker, that Canada has practically no social legislation as compared with Great Britain, Australia or New Zealand? Is it a coincidence that the right hon. gentleman has been in power and that Canada has been so reactionary, despite the fine words and the weaving of beautiful thoughts by the right hon. gentleman, than whom no one can weave them better? I do not think it is a coincidence; I think it is largely cause and effect. During the last election the papers were full of "King or chaos" and the common joke throughout the country to-day is that we got both. Another slogan was "Vote Liberal and get action." Did we get action? We have got inaction, reaction, laissez-faire and do nothing. That is what the people are calling this government to-day, the do-nothing government, and the devil take the hindmost. That is the picture.

So far as I can see, neither the right hon. gentleman nor any of his ministers seem to know conditions in Canada. On occasion I have been struck with this thought, that the right hon. gentleman is too much interested in external affairs to be really interested in or understand internal affairs and the needs of the people. Does he know their needs? Does the right hon. gentleman realize that this country is made up of nine provinces? I find myself wondering if he really does. Since he became Prime Minister, has he visited the nine provinces, in order to get the viewpoints of these people? There is no answer. If I am not mistaken, the right hon.

gentleman since the last election has not been within a thousand miles of his own constituency. I am open to correction; if I am wrong I shall withdraw that statement, but I think I should have said fifteen hundred miles. I repeat, Mr. Speaker, that the trouble is that this has been a government of reaction, of inaction, a Micawber-like government. That is the trouble. You will remember the fine old character of Micawber in David Copperfield. I am very fond of him, because he had such a comforting philosophy. The old fellow was always in debt, you will remember, and when things got particularly bad and his creditors chased him, he would give them a promissory note and thank God that debt was paid. Many years ago I referred to the same picture and said then, as I repeat now, that the right hon. gentleman always reminds me a great deal of Micawber, because when he is driven too hard by the people in regard to the conditions that exist throughout the country he gives them another promise, another oration or a royal commission. No wonder the people call this a do-nothing government.

The real problem in Canada to-day, to my mind, is unemployment, just as much as it was the problem in 1935, and I admit quite frankly that that was the case then. It is the problem of giving opportunity to our youth. It is the problem of giving security to our older people. If we are going to justify this democracy of which we boast so much; if we are going to justify this system, we must compete with the dictatorships. In such countries as Russia, Germany and Italy they claim that they are keeping their people occupied. They are keeping them occupied, in a way; I think at too high a cost. They have taken away freedom of the press, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly and freedom of religion, all of which we have in this country, thank heaven, under the British parliamentary system for which our ancestors fought for more than a thousand years. If we are to justify this democracy, and this economic system under which we live, variously called the capitalist system, the profit system, the reward system, the system of private property, of private enterprise; if we are to prevent our country from becoming a dictatorship of one kind or another, we must cure the defects of our system, and the great defect to-day is unemployment. I repeat to-night what I have previously said before various organizations in Canada, and what I said just a year ago before the Canadian Club of Ottawa, in the presence of my right hon. friend and some of his ministers: If we do not cure that defect, within