

urgently needed in Montreal, for which individuals and corporations are ready to supply money to the extent of many millions, but which are not started because when the specifications are made out and tenders opened it is found that the cost would be from 150 to 200 per cent more than it was before the war. These figures are absolutely prohibitive, and the people are waiting. I can state that between McGill street and the Post Office properties have been bought in the last two or three years for the purpose of the construction of large and imposing buildings, but these buildings will not be put up while costs are 150 to 200 per cent more than what they should be. Therefore I cannot understand why the leaders of organized labour do not place these facts clearly before their members, in order that they may realize that they are themselves to a large extent the cause of the unemployment in the large cities of Canada.

The other reason given by Mr. Martel was that the price of coal was soaring. That, again, is to a large extent due to the high wage paid to the miner. The skilled miner in the western part of Canada is to-day receiving an average of \$9.54, if I am not mistaken, and the ordinary labour \$5 and a fraction. The cost of transportation, owing to the high wage paid to railway employees, has been increased to an exceptional degree. So we find at the root of the difficulty the question of wages.

My honourable friend from Kings and Albert (Hon. Mr. Fowler) has said: "Let the people who have large salaries show the example; let us all show the example." I have no objection to that example being shown, but I contend that it has already, in a certain measure, been shown in the Income Tax which high-salaried officials are paying. There is more than one way of showing an example. I think that when the Income Tax returns are made, the wage-earners, who are free from that burden, will find that the people with large incomes are doing their bit for the carrying on of the affairs of this country. I have, as I have stated, no objection to an example being shown in various ways, such as that suggested by my honourable friend from Kings and Albert; but it would only be an example; it would not solve the economic problem. A reduction in salaries—the salaries of the higher railway officials, for instance—would be but a drop in the ocean. There are but few at the top who receive large salaries. It is the immense

army of wage-earners who represent the factor which weighs in the economic situation. A reduction of 10, 15, or 20 per cent in the wages of that immense army would practically solve the problem of costs. So that, while the suggestion of my honourable friend from New Brunswick (Hon. Mr. Fowler) is one which would perhaps appeal to the imagination of the masses, and satisfy them that those in the top ranks of society are not profiteers, yet the economic problem can only be solved by a reduction in wages. I am convinced that this resolution of the joint conference of the building and construction industries, if it were followed out, would have an immediate effect on the unemployment situation.

I do not suggest that labour should revert to pre-war rates. I am sure that the people at large who cannot be called wage-earners and who are not represented in labour organizations, are in favour of labour receiving a living wage.

I have no other suggestion to make, except to recall a recommendation made by the Secretary of the Bankers' Association, which was alluded to by my honourable friend from Halifax, namely, that an effort should be made to bring about a return of people to the land. My honourable friend from Halifax does not believe that this effort can be very effective unless we better the conditions of the farmers and their sons. This, again, is governed by general principles which must be recognized. So long as labour in the cities receives high wages and works short hours, it will be attracted to the cities. The young man of the farm, who in reading the papers observes what wages are paid for labour in the towns and cities, and that eight hours constitute a day's work for those wages, will naturally be induced to drop the twelve-hour work on the farm and will be attracted to the city. We cannot hope to keep the young men on the farms until conditions are brought back to normal, and that will not be until the city wage-earners agree to a reduction of the inflated wages they have been receiving since the beginning of the war.

The Secretary of the Bankers' Association made a suggestion which the Government should take into consideration, namely, that the Government, through its agencies, should notify the farming communities, who for a number of years have been complaining of a shortage of labour, that now is the time to apply to the provincial employment bureaus for labour from the cities. The best agency which has been mentioned is the Post Office. It has been sug-