

ensure a reduction of armaments all round. We all need it, the small nations as well as the great. I wonder if there is a country which participated in the war, except perhaps the United States, which only entered the war in April, 1917, that can meet its obligations and maintain its military establishment as it existed before the war? I feel quite sure that Canada will not be in a position to meet its obligations and to carry its load unless it reduces its military expenditure to pre-war-time dimensions. The only chance of salvation that I see for France, for Great Britain, for Italy, is retrenchment along that line. Of course, if they were handed back by the peace treaty the billions which they have expended, the difficulties would be more easily solved. But I doubt if any of the nations that have thus given their money and increased their debt to such a formidable figure shall receive any adequate return or recompense for that expenditure. It is all-important that Canada should return to the pre-war basis of expenditure for defence; otherwise this will become a very expensive country to live in; and then I wonder if immigrants will be attracted to our shores, especially in view of the prediction that the United States will soon recover from its exceptional conditions which make for an increase cost of living, and will revert to pre-war prices.

The Speech from the Throne speaks of demobilization and re-establishment. The first is easier of accomplishment than the second, as we see by the constant flow of soldiers returning to our shores. Re-establishment means the re-absorption into the ordinary peace-time industries of the military men and the men who had drifted into munition making. I am told that there are to-day at least 50,000 unemployed men in Canada. I have heard it said that there were 20,000 unemployed in Montreal. The honourable gentleman who sits to the right of the honourable leader of this House (Hon. Mr. Robertson) will perhaps be able to give us the exact figures as to unemployment. In any event it seems to me that there cannot be less than 50,000 unemployed in the country to-day. Local repatriation committees have been formed in the large cities in order to interest the local population in the re-absorption of the men, soldiers and civilians, who are coming from abroad and who will presently be out of work. These local committees will do what they can, but I wonder what they will be able to accomplish, because, whatever their good will, if there is no work offering they will be powerless. It seems to be admitted

that we can only hope to give work to these thousands of men through foreign orders for our mills. I ask this question: what has the Government done in the way of preparation to secure those foreign orders? I do not intend to be too critical; I do not intend to be recriminative; I simply put the question, and draw the attention of my honourable friend the leader of the Government to a statement of views of a colleague of his, Mr. McCurdy, which he issued in the latter part of November, which views he seemed to be still holding in the month of January last. You have all seen the statement, and the explanation which he gave, as to why he had withdrawn from the position of Parliamentary Secretary of the Militia Department. The despatch says:

After the formation of Union government his activities were transferred to the Department of Soldiers' Civil Re-Establishment. Mr. McCurdy tendered his resignation on September 17th last. Yesterday when asked for his reasons, he stated that in his opinion the department was not making sufficient progress in development of a comprehensive plan for dealing with the returned soldiers' problems and as the scope of his authority was indefinite and undefined, he could not consent to continue in a nominal office and be held at all responsible for the failures, if any, of the department that might result. In the opinion of Mr. McCurdy the problems of the department, which are increasing daily, have not been sufficiently anticipated and provided for. Where the work of that department needed the co-operation and assistance of other departments, he believes, there has been insufficient co-operation.

The Parliamentary Committee's report on Pensions, for instance, has not been heard of since it was presented to Parliament in May last, and "I doubt," said Mr. McCurdy, "if my colleagues in that committee will consider such inaction on the part of the Government as justified or in the best public interest. In resigning and registering my objections, I have felt that this view might be emphasized to the ultimate advantage of invalided and returning soldiers and the public generally."

Mr. McCurdy says that he fully recognized the grave difficulties and problems with which all departments were faced, and that, in retiring, he had no recriminations or criticisms of a personal character to offer. He felt, however, that greater and more satisfactory results could be had by facing and promptly solving our problems with courage and despatch and by anticipating the future more than has been the habit in some departments.

"One of the lessons of the war," Mr. McCurdy said, "has been the need of preparation in all public matters, but we now find that the problems of demobilization and reconstruction have come, after all, with embarrassing surprise to many departments, as will be evident shortly if our battalions are not to be kept unnecessarily long in public service and pay."

"The general preparation for peace conditions," Mr. McCurdy added, "had not in my opinion, received sufficiently earnest attention at the hands of the Government and this fact