

And this sounds very much like what we hear from across the chamber at times:

"In order to protect the American workman in his American wages and conditions of living, we must maintain the American protective tariff policy. This policy has given us our development and prosperity and any other policy would be destruction."

In Massachusetts, where Senator Butler is so keenly interested in industry and (maybe) the interest of the American workers, thousands of toilers in the textile mills for months drew no wages at all—American or other—because the mills were shut down.

Information from reliable sources indicate that many textile mills are shut down and that those working at all, are operating on greatly curtailed schedules. The workers in the textile industry surely, when they read Senator Butler's speech, will as the Indianapolis News in an editorial remarks, "think that it has an ancient and fishlike smell."

Now let us look elsewhere. Here is a book published by the National Industrial Conference Board, in New York City in 1925. It is captioned "Wages and Hours in American Industries." There is much good information in this book for the right hon. gentleman who leads the opposition, if he really thinks that conditions in the United States in 1924 were reasonably comparable with conditions in Canada. I think this book, if he peruses it sufficiently, will indicate to him that possibly we were well off in Canada in comparison with conditions prevailing in the United States, but in case the right hon. gentleman might not peruse the book, I am going to give just a few short extracts. The first is found on page 39, and is captioned "General Trend 1914-1924" and reads:

The spring of 1923 found industry operating close to capacity production in a few industries, notably automobiles, was exceeding any previous records. The textiles and metal trades were operating on an active basis and in fact nearly all industries found conditions highly satisfactory.

Between March and May, 1923, there was a widespread movement to increase wage rates, and advances of from 10 per cent to 15 per cent became general. Weekly earnings immediately responded to the higher hourly earnings and with continued full time operation, or in some cases overtime, they maintained an upward trend until the middle of the year.

That is for 1923. Then we go on to page 40 of the same publication:

By July, 1924, employment had dropped nearly 25 per cent from the total of the preceding July. Hours of work were substantially at 1921 levels and weekly earnings were considerably lower than in 1923.

I quote further from page 59 of the same publication:

A distinct change was noticeable in August—

This was in 1924.

—when the downward trend gave way to an increase of 2.4 per cent this was the more marked, since August is normally a poor industrial month, owing to midsummer conditions.

[Mr. Murdock.]

The upward trend was continued in September with a further gain of 1.9 per cent, bringing employment to a point 28 per cent lower than at the 1920 peak and 20 per cent lower than the average for 1923, but 4.4 per cent higher than in July 1924.

Then we come to the reference to the iron and steel industry in the United States, page 83:

The iron and steel industry enjoyed a considerable spurt of activity at the beginning of 1924. This is best indicated by the gains in employment, which advanced about 19 per cent between December, 1923, and March, 1924. After this brief period of improvement the recession was rapid until July, when total employment was hardly more than half that reported in June 1920, and 25 per cent lower than in March, 1924. In August there was a distinct reaction upward and in September a still more pronounced gain, bringing employment to within 61.7 per cent of the total for June, 1920.

Then we come further to the reference to the textile group:

Of the five industries included in the textile group, the cotton industry in the north faced the most difficult problems. The short crop of cotton forced prices up to a point which made the manufacture of fabrics at existing wage levels, to sell at current prices, next to impossible. The result was a progressive curtailment of working schedules until a point was reached where many mills were completely shut down for weeks at a time. Between July, 1923, and July, 1924, total employment fell off 32 per cent, and average hours of work per week declined from 46.1 hours to 40.0 hours.

That Mr. Speaker, is a further example of the conditions in the United States which we have been so often told are exceptionally good.

Let me now refer to a comparison between retail food prices in Canada and those in the United States and other countries. We have been chided by the opposition on every possible occasion on the ground of our alleged failure to do anything at all to reduce the cost of living. Let us see just what we have done in that respect; let us see

5 p.m. what a comparison with other countries will show. I have here, on pages 46 and 47 of the Monthly Labour Review, which is the official publication of the Department of Labour of the United States, a comparison of retail price changes, giving the index number of the retail prices in the United States and in other countries. Some nineteen countries are included here, and Canada appears to be in about the second best condition of any of the countries referred to. If there is no objection, Mr. Speaker, I think it would be appropriate that this comparison should be placed on Hansard in order to show that Canada is at least in as favourable a position as almost any other country as regards the retail prices of food.