

consider the meaning of the word "opportunist" and of the word "opportunity" you will admit they are rather elastic terms. My hon. friend used the word opportunist because he thought it was a slur against the administration of this government, but I want to say to him and this House that if an opportunist means meeting the wishes, and views of the great majority of the people of this Dominion as we see them, and a party representing a great majority of that public opinion from the Atlantic to the Pacific, then I am prepared to take the odium of being called an opportunist.

Next, my hon. friend from Vancouver Centre felt like coming to the relief of the agriculturists of this country, and he came to their relief in the same way that all our friends opposite come to the relief of that great body. What does he say in regard to that? May I be permitted to quote just a sentence or two from his remarks?

Now, what is wanted in Canada in connection with this financial stringency to which I have referred is some sound policy which will enable the farmer of the West particularly to fund his current indebtedness. My hon. friends, I think, will all agree with me that that is one of the most crying needs of the West to-day. It does not profit us nor will it get us anywhere to say to those debtors that they needlessly went into debt in some cases, or that it was through over-optimism in other cases; the fact is they are heavily in debt, this indebtedness is drawing large rates of interest, and the farmers cannot fund it. What is required to meet the situation is an opportunity of funding their current debts by term loans at reasonable rates.

That sounds a reasonable proposition. My hon. friends opposite, realizing at last the financial position which the farmers of the West, represented by the Progressive group in this House, are in now say: We want the government or some other institution to come to their rescue and give them an opportunity of funding their debts, and going on losing money in the future as they have in the past. Mr. Speaker, that is not the panacea that the government of the day hands out to the agriculturists in all parts of this Dominion. We hope to place before the farmers of this country an opportunity of not only funding their debts, but of being able to live and make a profit on their operations, and of being able to pay their debts instead of funding them.

My hon. friend also makes another very splendid reference in that very eloquent speech of his. Let me read just a line or two more. He was describing the beautiful trip he had had from his home town to Ottawa:

As we came along I saw a little cabin in a clearing of about five acres, and at the door stood a

woman, cherry of countenance, and around her four little children clinging to her skirts and waving to the train as it went by. Out in the little patch of cleared land was the husband preparing the soil for his spring crop, and the thought came to me that this man with his wife and children was solving the problem of northern Ontario which has so long been baffling the statesmen of this country.

Yet that is the very idea of my hon. friends opposite. Here was a man out trying to clear a little space in the forest to make a home for himself and his family, and earn, not a decent living, but a mere existence, as we know is the case with many in the pioneering days. If my hon. friend had continued his trip he would have found in the Maritime provinces, or in the middle West, many more of those same pioneers. And he proposes to let them carry on by borrowing money from the government, funding their debts, and to go on losing money in the future. I say, Mr. Speaker, that is not a proper solution of the difficulty. The only fair and proper way to meet it is for the government and parliament to seriously consider the question and to initiate a policy that will enure to the benefit of these people who are pioneers, who have gone out into the wilderness and waste places of Canada and are now attempting to build up and populate that part of the country in which they are settled.

Naturally a discussion on the tariff and taxation leads us to consider two great classes. On the one hand there are the manufacturers who have for the past fifty years been more or less aided by the policy of protection. On the other hand there are the agriculturists and the consumers who are looking seriously into the fiscal question and trying to find some relief from their burdens. Personally I have nothing unkind to say of the manufacturers; we are very proud of the industries that have been built up in different parts of this country. However, as I said previously, the majority of them are located in the two provinces of Quebec and Ontario. In order to place before parliament what I consider to be a fairly good reason why practically all the manufacturers in Ontario are opposing any interference with the present fiscal policy let me quote a few statistics from the Canada Year Book for 1922-23. The tabulated statement I have here shows the value of the output of the four basic industries of agriculture, forestry, fishing and mining, contrasted with that of manufacturing for each province for the year in question. It is as follows: