

omic reconstruction of our country without any interference in European affairs.

There is another very strong reason why this Parliament should not ratify the Treaty, and that is the unconstitutionality of such approval on our part. We are limited by the British North America Act, according to which we have no power to bind Canada to military participation beyond our own territory, except for its own defence; and we are seeking to so bind Canada when we undertake to ratify the Treaty. It is not necessary to discuss this question at any great length. It seems to me that the mere enunciation of it is sufficient to show the soundness of the proposition that we have no power to bind this Dominion to participation in military matters outside our own territory. It is true that the Prime Minister on Tuesday told us that Canada had acquired a new international status since the Peace Conference. But, Sir, I should like to know what changes were brought about. I should like to know if our constitutional relations with Great Britain have been affected by the Treaty, and, if so, what the changes are. I am convinced, Mr. Speaker, that we have absolutely no power to assume such obligations as are proposed in the Peace Treaty, and particularly in the Covenant of the League of Nations, and that in so assuming them we shall be violating the provisions of the Constitution that governs us. It is not within our power to alter the Constitution which we have received from the Imperial Parliament, and without hesitation I express the sincere opinion that we should not ratify the Peace Treaty, or, at any rate, that we should not enter the League of Nations. We are not a nation in the international sense of the word. Consequently, we have no power to assume the obligations of a nation any more than we can enjoy the rights, powers and privileges of a nation. If ever a war happens in which the great principles of justice and humanity are at stake, I am sure that we will be ready to give our voluntary participation as we have in the past. Why should we tie our hands and not keep our liberty when our international influence is so lightly thought of that the Imperial authorities would have forgotten us had it not been for the strong representations made by the Prime Minister? Why should we insist under the circumstances upon taking part in a treaty by which we are assuming unlimited responsibilities without any compensation? For myself I am very much inclined to vote against the Treaty because

the Treaty contains the Covenant of the League of Nations.

Now, I am coming to a most important subject which should, above all, occupy public attention at the present time—the cost of living. The general unrest in this country is, in great measure, the result of the high cost of living. We cannot expect any improvement in the situation unless we apply the necessary remedy. As long as the situation remains unchanged there will be strikes and trouble. We can settle a strike to-day by meeting the demands of the workmen for higher wages but the strike will be renewed as soon as the prices of foodstuffs and the necessities of life are increased. There is no justification for such steady increases. There is no justification for the high cost of living. The speculators and the profiteers are according to my opinion, mainly responsible for the trouble and it is the duty of this Government and of this Parliament to put an end to their criminal extortions. In my opinion the cold storage is directly responsible for the terrible situation in which we find ourselves. The Government should see to it that the accumulation of food is made for the benefit of the public and not to its prejudices. The prices of foodstuffs are controlled by the cold storages and in an arbitrary manner. They constitute a monopoly of which they are taking reprehensible advantage. It is simply shameful. If this Government has any intention of avoiding crime, disorder or revolution it is time, if indeed it is not too late, drastic measures should be taken. The hon. the Minister of Marine and Fisheries (Mr. Ballantyne) answering a question during the last session of Parliament, as to what was the intention of the Government concerning the cost of living, told the House that the Government was to build a large cold storage. This, Mr. Speaker, was an admission on his part that cold storages are largely concerned in the matter of the cost of living. If so, instead of building cold storages, why not take possession of those existing and then accumulate foodstuffs for the benefit of the people? I do not see any good reason for not doing so. This Government should have long ago taken the necessary steps to fight the enemy. In England, in France, and in the United States the fight has been on for many months and the results which have been secured are absolutely satisfactory. Practically nothing has been done in this country yet. It is true the right hon. the Prime Minister (Sir Robert Borden) gave figures