

war, but had to suffer all the evils that followed. Perhaps conditions during the recent World War and since have not been ideal; but we are today in a much sounder financial condition than we were after the first World War.

**Hon. Mr. Horner:** But we have gone in debt to an amount of \$14 billion. Anybody can be prosperous while he is spending the mortgage money!

**Hon. Mr. Robertson:** I am going to deal with that point, my friend. I refer to the particular mentality of the Conservative party with respect to finance.

**Hon. Mr. Haig:** Would the honourable leader give us some figures on our debt? I should like to know the amount of Canada's debt at the commencement and at close of World War I and World War II.

**Hon. Mr. Robertson:** My honourable friend has asked a specific question which I am unable to answer. There is a point of view which may be expressed in this way: "Admitted that we are better off than we ever were; admitted that your business, my business, the business of the country as a whole is more flourishing than ever; still, we want more—more—more". This brings to mind what I read long ago in the history of ancient Rome. When the conquerors came back laden with the spoils of war, as the plunder was unloaded from the ships the populace cried out "Let us, too, share the spoils", and great was the turmoil when they got down to making a division.

On my last visit overseas I was in old London, and marked the terrific devastation that had taken place through the destruction of so many buildings. Unlike some honourable senators, I was unable to visit the refugee camps in Germany, but I visited the headquarters of various organizations and heard something of the tremendous problems incidental to the war, and learned to some extent how national economy in many countries had been upset for years to come. We do not realize how little we know of war and its destructive effects. Considering the wonderful progress which this country has made, there is to my mind something painful and unbecoming in the argument that though we have all this we should have more and more. I wonder whether, if an attempt were made to assess and compare the contributions of various elements of our population, and their share in the war, my honourable friend would advance his claim for the wheat farmers and for the landlords.

**Hon. Mr. Haig:** I did not mention landlords.

**Hon. Mr. Robertson:** My honourable friend did not, but I took his argument to mean that because of government action they had obtained less than they otherwise would have got. I suppose the honourable senator from Medicine Hat (Hon. Mr. Gershaw) could claim, on that basis, that had the market in the United States been opened earlier, the cattle raisers would have made more. Arguments of this kind raise very grave questions and, contemplating on one hand the views of my honourable friend, and on the other the devastation of the war, I am moved to think of the boy who gave his life in battle, or perhaps in the torture chamber, and of his comrade who will be the inmate of a hospital for the rest of his days. Then I ask myself how these sacrifices can be valued, how these contributions can be assessed. Nothing in this world is perfect. You cannot have a perfect equality of sacrifice in war, or an exact and equitable sharing of the spoils and rewards. But I say this to you, that in no other country has the administration of this most difficult problem been dealt with more equitably, so far as there can be anything equitable concerned with war, than in this country; and I suggest to my honourable friend that he has made better arguments than the one he presented this afternoon.

**Hon. Mrs. Fallis:** Would the honourable senator permit a question?

**Hon. Mr. Robertson:** Certainly.

**Hon. Mrs. Fallis:** In contending that the claim of the wheat farmers stands on the same basis as that of the lumberman or those engaged in any other business, is he not overlooking the fact that the growing of crops is in a rather different category; that the wheat farmer may have a good crop this year and be without a crop for the next five years; that while he may work hard and do everything in his power, he is at the mercy of the elements? For that reason, we think that when there is an opportunity for him to make a profit on his crop he should be permitted to do so. In some parts of Western Canada four or five years may go by before the farmer will get another crop; but so far as other businesses and other crops are concerned, conditions are more uniform from year to year.

**Hon. Mr. Robertson:** That is a fair point. It might be the basis of an argument by the honourable senator from Northumberland (Hon. Mr. Burchill); and I would admit that the lumber business is subject to mischances of one kind and another. Sometimes we have speculated whether the Maritime provinces would become the Florida of Canada. When the lumberman's logs are in the woods and