

sand. I expect something more than an ostrich-like attitude from a minister of labour, whatever government happens to be in office. I expect something in the form of statesmanship; I expect the government to grapple with unemployment, not to allow themselves to drift into the attitude of waiting until something turns up and hoping conditions will get better. I am just wondering, Mr. Speaker, whether conditions are going to get better. I am not a pessimist, as perhaps some people are or as some people may think I am, but I do think we should face conditions as they are. At present I think we have in this country about 200,000,000 bushels of grain, or about two-thirds of last year's crop. If we have a good crop, in the fall of 1930, I am wondering whether prosperity is going to come this year. After all, the law of supply and demand will hold good in the selling of wheat just as it holds good in connection with any other commodity. This is an economic law, and in my estimation it does not hold out a great deal for the farmer in the year 1930; in fact, he might be better off if the acreage this year were a great deal less than it was in the year 1929. This was what happened in the United States when there was an over-production of cotton; they agreed to reduce the cotton acreage in order that prices might become somewhat stabilized, and I do not know whether a huge wheat crop would be of any benefit to the farmer if he got it in the year 1930.

There are one or two points which I should like to bring up in this connection before I close. I think, Mr. Speaker, that it is something of a reflection upon our whole economic structure that to-day in the Dominion of Canada there should be want in the midst of plenty. I said before that one of the reasons why that want exists is because there is over-production and under-consumption. Also some way must be devised by which we can promote a closer relationship between the wages which are paid to the men employed in industry and that which they produce. In the past few years there has been an ever-increasing productivity due in the first place to the introduction of machinery and in the second place to the speeding-up process to which the men have been subjected. In spite of this increasing productivity wages have remained about stationary; in other words there has been more and more going in the way of profits to those who own the means of production. The position of the wage earners has become relatively worse, because the number of men required to produce a greater

[Mr. Heaps.]

quantity of commodities has been diminishing. One of the causes of the existing unemployment situation is the fact that to-day a man employed in industry is turning out probably 50 per cent or 75 per cent more than he did ten or fifteen years ago. If that is one of the causes, as I say it is, then we ought to get down to fundamentals and not deal with the more or less superficial questions to which we sometimes devote a great deal of attention.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that when the committee which is to interview the government in relation to the unemployment situation comes to Ottawa on Wednesday next the government should accede to some of their requests. They will make two or three very important suggestions, which I hope the government will see their way clear to adopt.

I am not going to deal with the returned soldier problem. I think it has been well dealt with during the day, and, as the previous speaker said, the house has been fairly unanimous in its attitude toward the returned soldiers and their problems and I feel that the house will again take the same attitude this session. However, in addition to that question there are the two others, one dealing with unemployment insurance and another with the appointment of an economic commission, which should be inquired into. The question of unemployment insurance is coming more and more to the front as the unemployment problem becomes greater, and I sincerely hope the government will appoint an economic commission to consider this and other related questions. There have been previous commissions on unemployment; the last one was in 1919, eleven years ago, and during those eleven years there have been vast changes in our mode of production. There have been changes in other directions; there have been amalgamations of all kinds and we have had prosecutions by the government of certain combines. In connection with other combines, however, the different governments of Canada have actually insisted that they be created. I am referring particularly now to the combine with regard to newsprint. There the governments of Ontario and Quebec have insisted that the price of newsprint should be greater than it has been in the past, and their demand has been met. We have all this price-fixing by the government, but wages fluctuate according to the law of supply and demand and I believe the government will be doing a good thing if, when the opportune time comes within the next few days, they give a favourable reply to